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The Human in the Fantastic: The Use of Fantasy in the Work of Terry Pratchett

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Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Miguel Pereira Bastos da Silva

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To Sir Terry Pratchett, who was inspiring to me not only for his unparalleled genius as a writer and thinker, but for his courage to remain such an inspiration through the harshest hardship.

To the woman that inspires every single word I write, regardless of context.

Contents

Declaração de honra

Declaro que a presente dissertação é de minha autoria e não foi utilizada previamente noutro curso ou unidade curricular, desta ou de outra instituição. As referências a outros autores (afirmações, ideias, pensamentos) respeitam escrupulosamente as regras da atribuição, e encontram-se devidamente indicadas no texto e nas referências bibliográficas, de acordo com as normas de referenciação. Tenho consciência de que a prática de plágio e auto-plágio constitui um ilícito académico.

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 30 de Setembro de 2018

Nuno Guilherme Cabral Joanaz de Melo

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Resumo

Terry Pratchett, criador do Discworld, foi um escritor de literatura fantástica de grande sucesso, sendo aquela um tipo de literatura que tem mecanismos específicos para lidar com temas humanos de um modo particular. O objetivo deste estudo é explorar como o corpo de trabalho deste autor pode contribuir para entender duas dimensões diferentes da experiência humana: a descoberta do que significa ser humano a nível individual e o significado de ultrapassar preconceitos e fazer parte de uma comunidade. No primeiro capítulo, é considerada uma seleção de conclusões tiradas da crítica literária sobre fantasia e é feita uma análise dos materiais que deram forma ao Discworld. No segundo capítulo são analisados alguns romances centrados na personagem da Morte para discutir o que significa ser um indivíduo. No terceiro capítulo são analisados alguns romances centrados na Guarda da Cidade de Ankh-Morpork para discutir o ultrapassar de preconceitos e a integração numa comunidade. Para além das conclusões específicas retiradas em cada capítulo, este estudo pretende demonstrar que acima de tudo o Discworld é um mundo, e um mundo que não só mostra o que é fantástico na imaginação humana, mas também o humano no fantástico.

Palavras-chave: Literatura Fantástica, Terry Pratchett, Discworld, Auto-Descoberta, Preconceito

Abstract

Terry Pratchett, the creator of the Discworld, was an extremely successful author of fantasy literature, a type of literature with specific mechanisms to deal with human matters in a particular fashion. The aim of this study is to explore how his work can provide insight into two different dimensions of the human experience: the discovery of humanity on an individual level and the understanding of what it means to overcome prejudice and be part of a community. In the first chapter, a selection of points made in literary criticism about fantasy is considered and an analysis of the materials that shaped the Discworld is made. In the second chapter a number of novels centred on Death are analysed in order to discuss what it means to be an individual. In the third chapter a number of novels centred on the Ankh-Morpork City Watch are analysed in order to discuss the overcoming of prejudice and what it means to belong in a community. In addition to the specific points made in each chapter, this study intends to demonstrate that above all the Discworld is a world, and one that shows not only what is fantastic in the human imagination, but what is human in the fantastic.

Keywords: Fantasy Literature, Terry Pratchett, Discworld, Self-Discovery, Prejudice.

Index of Illustrations

Introduction

All art comes from reality. It may try to copy it down to the most insignificant detail, to distort it almost beyond recognition or even to escape it completely, but reality is always the frame of reference, the starting point. Art in general, and literature in particular, then, are a mirror, a mirror which varies in the accuracy of its reflection, depending on the intentions of the artisan who fashioned it and whoever looks upon it, but still a mirror. From the onset, Fantasy or Fantastic Literature do not intend to be an accurate mirror, but instead are not shy about their intent to twist reality. An appropriate metaphor would perhaps be the distorting mirrors one can find at a carnival. On the one hand, because they change the original image in such a grotesque fashion it becomes ridiculously implausible, laughable even. On the other hand, however, because that mirror also puts into a sharper focus parts of the original image one would ordinarily miss or disregard. That is the premise of this dissertation, that through the twisting of reality beyond what it is possible to consider realistic, fantastic literature can bring to the foreground several dimensions of the human experience, in a way that a direct approach is just not able to manage.

Fantasy literature in general being too large a body of works, the focus of this essay will be a portion of the work of Sir Terry Pratchett, the creator of the Discworld novels. The aspects of his life that are deemed relevant for his readers to be aware is in the short biography present in his books being:

> Terry Pratchett was the acclaimed creator of the global bestselling Discworld series, the first of which, *The Colour of Magic*, was published in 1983. His fortieth Discworld novel, *Raising Steam*, was published in 2013. His books have been widely adapted for stage and screen, and he was the winner of multiple prizes, including the Carnegie Medal, as well as being awarded a knighthood for services to literature. He died in March 2015. (Pratchett and Simpson 2014)

To make the desired point, the first chapter will consider a selection of points made in literary criticism about fantasy, focusing on how fantasy literature helps understand the real through the unrealistic. To further that point a study will be made about the way the Discworld is constructed, paying special attention to the effort that is made beyond the novels themselves.

The main objective of this dissertation is to understand how Pratchett comments on the human experience through fantasy. The texts that will be studied concern different dimensions of that experience. The second chapter focuses on what it means to be an individual. To do that it will analyse a group of novels that focuses on the character and the "family" of Death, the anthropomorphic personification of death, a character that is both ideally placed to observe humanity and thoroughly inhuman. Novels deemed relevant include *Mort* and *Reaper Man*.

The third chapter will focus on what it means to be part of a community by examining the City Watch of Ankh-Morpork, and the novels that centre around it such as *Men at Arms* and *Jingo*. It will be shown that the main issues dealt with in those novels relate strongly to the overcoming of prejudice.

Through this analysis, then, this study will hopefully demonstrate that Terry Pratchett is a particularly crafty and inspired carnival-mirror maker.

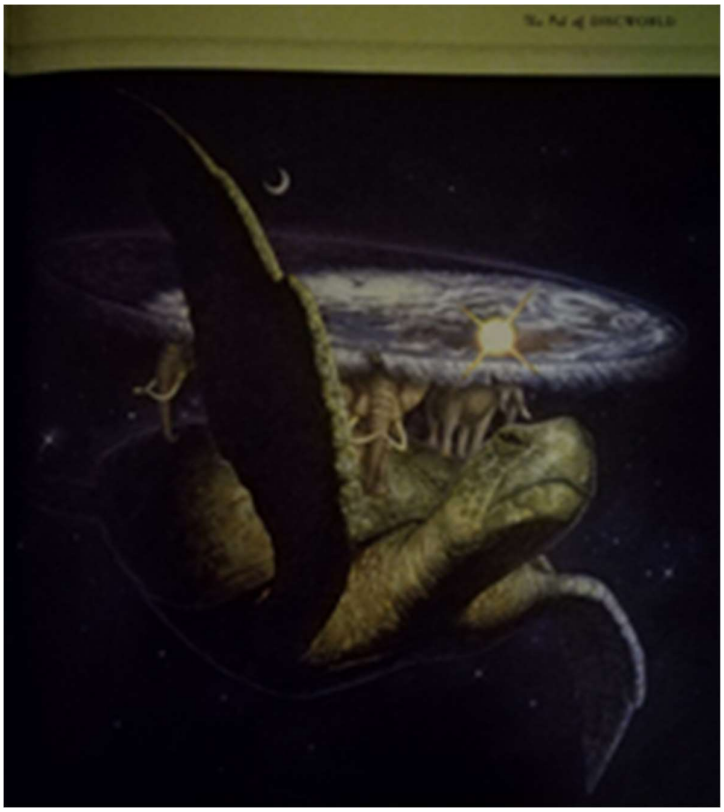

Figure 1. The Discworld (Paul Kidby, in Pratchett and Kidby 2004)

Chapter 1 – Building a Flat World

1.1. Fantasy in Criticism

1.1.1. Defining Fantasy

> Fantasy is not so much a mansion as a row of terraced houses (…) with (…) connecting attics, each with a door that leads to another world. There are shared walls, and a certain level of consensus around the basic bricks, but the internal decór can differ wildly, and the lives lived in these terraced houses are discrete yet overheard. (James and Mendlesohn 2012, 1)

As can be concluded from the quote above, the first thing to realize when searching for a concise definition of fantasy as a literary genre is that there is no such thing. And to that effect it is worth looking at some of the most prevalent theories and arguments formulated over the years. The first step would be clarifying that fantasy and the fantastic are concepts just too wide to reduce to a single definition. They can be judged to be something as universal as a narrative impulse, such as Kathryn Hume proposes in *Fantasy and Mimesis*. Or, as Brian Atterby puts it in *Strategies of Fantasy*, fantasy, even as a strictly literary concept, can vary drastically in scope, as it can be considered a mode, a genre and even a formula.

> First (…) I attempt to sort out different uses of the term *fantasy*, which is, even within strictly literary applications, variously applied to a nearly universal impulse, a still-evolving genre, and a strict storytelling formula. (Atterby 1992, xii)

Atterby's approach is one of the most accepted and referred to, a significant part of the reason for that being that from the start it acknowledges these radically different ways of interpreting the concept and then proceeds to explain how some points of view encompass too much or too little to allow for a working definition and finally settles for the compromise he calls the "fuzzy set".

When it comes to analysing Fantasy through a perspective so wide it encompasses most if not all fiction one cannot fail to mention Kathryn Hume, as Atterby himself does. Hume's argument in *Fantasy and Mimesis: responses to reality in western literature* is that both Fantasy and Mimesis are equally important impulses that lead to the creation of most literary fiction, her thoughts on this matter being best described in her own words:

> I have tried *not* to isolate fantasy from the rest of literature. It is truer to literary practice to admit that fantasy is not a separate or indeed separable strain, but rather an impulse as significant as the mimetic impulse, and to recognize that both are involved in the creation of most literature. (Hume 1984, xii)

Her work elevates the concept of fantasy and is certainly relevant to any study that proposes to analyse it, however it is too ambitious to provide a working definition if one wishes to find a fairly restrict group of authors, plotlines, motifs, imagery and any other type of element. Nevertheless, her simple, even if, again, rather wide, definition of fantasy is an excellent starting point: "[Fantasy is] the deliberate departure from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal" (Hume 1984, xii).

What Atterby calls Mode in his *Strategies of Fantasy* draws heavily on Hume's thesis, even if he is not so extreme as to encompass "most literature". He mentions works not only separated by centuries, but that are wildly different in their plots, purpose, and style of storytelling. What he wishes to convey is that the fantasy mode can include extremely different authors and that because of that it "threatens to become meaningless" (Atterby 1992, 1).

What this author calls formula is at the other end of the spectrum, having a remarkably narrow scope, he describes it as being "essentially a commercial product, with particular authors or publishers' lines serving as brand names for the consumer" (Atterby 1992, 2). He goes on to clarify that as a commercial product these works depend on predictability and consistency, and as a consequence are very close to interchangeable.

When he compares the two he remarks how easy it is to identify the formula end on the "fantasy scale", but that its actual social function is much harder to describe, and that on the opposite end the mode is capable of "taking in all literary manifestations of the imagination's ability to soar above the merely possible." His conclusion, then, on comparing mode and formula is that "it is difficult to say anything meaningful about

either the mode, which is so vast, or the formula, which tends towards triviality" (Atterby 1992, 2).

Genre would, consequently, seem to be the perfect middle ground, but even here the ever-growing field defies definition, precisely because it can include so many different formulas. Atterby's solution is to completely evade the conundrum by simply ignoring it. Instead of forcing fantastic literature to fit in an ironclad definition, or even considering a concise canon to function as a template, he proposes to deal with fantastic literature as what he, in his own words, calls a "fuzzy set". This is quite an elegant solution that instead of finding a set group of novels, finds one, or a series of them, to function as a centre, the quintessentially fantastic novel in a way, and then defines all others in how they relate to it.

Regardless of what works Brian Atterby considered to be at the centre of the genre in 1992, the time at which *Strategies of Fantasy* was published, this is still a valid and useful way of avoiding the polemic discussion. And as a matter of fact, the analysis of Terry Pratchett's own Discworld series has only to gain with this perspective, since it includes within its inarguably fantastic setting a myriad of different tropes: such as the detective novel, the coming of age novel, the journey of self-discovery, several different plays on the epic voyage, and so on.

Brian Atterby's *Strategies of Fantasy* is not a particularly recent volume, having been published in 1992, being 25 years old as of the date this dissertation is being written. In the fast-growing field of fantasy literature this is a long time, which is why some of the works Atterby references as being paramount in their influence on the field may not be quite so alone in their pedestal as he would lead you to believe, and why some of his notions and predictions may be somewhat outdated. Nevertheless, his work continues to be one of the most influential and his arguments regarding the indefinable nature of fantasy as genre have been continuously corroborated.

As recently as 2014, for example, Bruce A. Beatie, reviewed for the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* a collection titled: "Collision of Realities: Establishing Research on the Fantastic in Europe" by Lars Schmeink and Astrid Boger, which is the English-language version of the volume of papers of a 2010 conference held by the Society for

the Study of the Fantastic. In his review Beatie writes: “In their short preface (1-3), the editors note that “[f]rom the beginning, research in the fantastic has not been able to establish a consensual definition of its object of inquiry.”

Atterby’s fuzzy set theory has remained prevalent, it is mentioned, for example, in another volume that intends to study fantasy literature: *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, edited by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn and published in 2012. This volume is much more recent than *Strategies of Fantasy*, which means that it takes into consideration a lot of authors that were not as relevant 20 years earlier, including Terry Pratchett. When it comes to the issue of defining Fantasy it does not, however, deviate from the argument put forth in the earlier volume, in the editors’ own words: “Fantasy literature has proven tremendously difficult to pin down” (James and Mendlesohn 2012, 1).

This is a simple statement that nevertheless summarizes the issue adequately. The editors go on to explain how most critics would formulate boundaries to include authors they felt deserving and which ended up excluding most of what readers in general thought of as fantasy. Eventually, when it comes to this issue, they quite simply refer the reader to Brian Atterby’s *Strategies of Fantasy* and his “fuzzy set”.

It should be mentioned that Brian Atterby himself has continued publishing well after *Strategies of Fantasy*, and that in his 2014 book *Stories about Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* he addresses once more the problem of defining genres, and specifically Fantasy as a genre. At that date, regarding that particular issue, he refers to his previous “fuzzy set” theory, and while he concedes that it does not take into account certain historically relevant volumes, he still defends it as it does not negate them either. This volume, however, explores how myths and folklore influence modern fantasy literature, and relevant as it may be regarding that issue and therefore to Pratchett’s own work, it does not revisit a great many issues approached in *Strategies of Fantasy*, and when it does, understandably, it mostly refers to the author’s previous work.

Hopefully this is enough to show that defining fantasy in a restrict fashion is nigh impossible and that agreeing that what connects different fantastic works is a group of

elements that, like Hume wrote, "[deliberately depart] from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal."

When it comes to searching for critical theories about a genre, or mode as the case may be, because of a particular author, taking that author's own opinion into consideration is an essential step, and as it happens Sir Terry Pratchett has some very definite views on what it means to write Fantasy: "I think I write fantasy. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then you might as well stick an orange in its bottom and eat it with green peas. (Pratchett 2000, 160). What Pratchett takes to be this look, walk and quack, at least what he acknowledges them to be for the public at large is explicit in this quote:

> But what people generally have in mind when they hear the word fantasy is swords, talking animals, vampires, rockets (science fiction is fantasy with bolts on), and around the edges it can indeed be pretty silly. Yet fantasy also speculates about the future, rewrites the past and reconsiders the future. It plays games with the universe. (Pratchett 1993, 2)

For the most part, Terry Pratchett does not concern himself too much with what is or is not fantasy, or with where the line is between fantasy and its inspiration, its primordial origins. The fact is that, in spite of the fact that he calls himself a "genre author", he does not delve into what that genre implies. To him fantasy is just a different kind of reality, in his own words: "fantasy is (…) logical about the wrong things, about those parts of human experience where (…) we don't use logic because it doesn't work properly" (Pratchett 2000, 160).

He is, however, a fierce defender of the genre, whatever the genre might be, and it is on that matter that he has strong views. As the enjoyment of fantasy can be hindered by certain critical approaches and as a writer and reader of a genre that is often underappreciated, Pratchett does not seem to think much of an over intellectualization of fantasy: "Please call it fantasy, by the way. Don't call it 'magical realism'[1], that's just fantasy wearing a collar and tie" (Pratchett 1993a, 4).

[1] Magical Realism, when it comes to literature, is a critical concept that includes works that use fantastical elements and which use realistic tools to describe those magical events: "The key to understanding how magical realism works is to understand the way in which the narrative is constructed in order to provide a

Since Pratchett's position regarding the concept of fantasy does not equate with that of some of the most relevant literary critics in the field when it comes to discussing the author concerned here, it is perhaps better to just ask if the Discworld series is within the general realm of fantasy, and how so.

1.1.2 Elements of Fantasy

As has been concluded above, listing or analysing every type of element that can be found on fantasy literature in its entire possible spectrum is not only a herculean task but a futile one as well, and, above all, well beyond the proposed scope for this essay. Therefore, the focus will be on those elements that most define Pratchett's writing when it comes to the Discworld series. The two main aspects that will be dealt here are the inspiration drawn from folklore and mythology that created so many characters, and the satirical tone that is the foundation block of the Discworld.

To explore the concept of folklore in fantasy it is once again possible to turn to Brian Atterby, as his 2014 volume *Stories about Stories: fantasy & the remaking of myth* deals with precisely that matter, and to Terry Pratchett himself, who was never shy about admitting he used this source constantly, along with Jacqueline Simpson with their *The Folklore of Discworld*.

In *Stories about Stories*, Atterby's main claim will eventually be that: "fantasy, as a literary form, is a way of reconnecting to traditional myths and the worlds they generate." (Atterby 2014, 1). Furthermore, he goes on to state that its cultural relevance derives precisely from tat connection: "But fantasy's main claim to cultural importance resides, I believe, in the work of redefining the relationship between contemporary readers and mythic texts" (Atterby 2014, 4).

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realistic context to the mystical events of the fiction. Magical realism, therefore, relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits." (Bowers 2007, 2)

Rather than defining fantasy, this concept analyses it from a different perspective, one that closely connects it with realism. As such this approach is not ideal to use in the context of defining fantasy, but it can be useful when discussing the creation of fantastic worlds such as the Discworld.

With this we can understand that for Atterby myth is not just another influence on the fantasy genre, it is a defining one. Myth is not just another source of inspiration for fantasy, but rather that fantasy as a genre is a way of reconnecting with those roots of cultural imagination. Of course, there might be some ambiguity as to what is "myth". In his usual pragmatic fashion, Atterby solves this problem by broadening his understanding of the word "myth" to include all manner of cultural storytelling methods, methods he considers have been used by fantasy writers as a single source rather than several:

> Modern Fantasy draws on a number of traditional narrative genres – sacred and secular legends, Märchen, epics, and ballads – and a wide array of cultural strands.
> (…)
> Since the time of the Grimms, fantasy writers have treated all those oral genres as part of a single resource: different veins in the same mother lode of symbolic narrative. (Atterby 2014, 2)

There are literally hundreds of examples where a reader can see that Pratchett is one such fantasy writer. He has stated it himself: "I think about folklore in the same way that a carpenter thinks about trees" (Pratchett 2000, 159). The writer draws inspiration from several different cultures and the idea that "fantasy spins stories about stories." (Atterby 2014, 3) the very notion behind the title of Atterby's volume, is one that could have been tailored to Pratchett. He definitely spins stories about stories, it is one of the foundation points of the physics of the Discworld. That particular fact, however, is only to be discussed further along in this dissertation, because the main concern here is how he draws inspiration from what he calls folklore. It should be pointed out that Pratchett uses the word "folklore" in a similar fashion to the way Atterby uses "myth". As it happens the author himself collaborated with Jacqueline Simpson, a specialist in folklore, to help his readers understand the place folklore has in his Discworld novels and exploring what those sources are is precisely the purpose of *The Folklore of Discworld*.

The first thing to mention about *The Folklore of Discworld* is the language. What is effectively being done is, of course, an analysis of Terry Pratchett's folkloric sources of inspiration throughout the Discworld novels, which Jaqueline Simpson's Introduction states. In her own words, while commenting on the danger of explaining the wonder of a world such as the Discworld:

> But as Terry has said elsewhere, a conjurer is more entertaining than a wizard because he entertains you twice: once with the trick, and once with the trickery.
>
> So now, there's a drum-roll, the curtains part, and you can watch the conjurer works… (Pratchett and Simpson 2014, 17)

Beyond both Pratchett's Introductions and Simpson's, however, the way that analysis is presented is as a straightforward comparison between the Earth and the Discworld and in a typical Pratchett fashion the first thing to be done is to explain why the two have so much in common:

> We can fairly safely say that there are clumps of matter on that rubber sheet [the universe], moving about and organizing themselves into complicated systems. Billions of them. Two of these deserve our close attention. One consists of a rather lumby and intensely hot spherical core of iron and rock, much of it in a molten state, held together by its own pressure, and wrapped in a thin solid crust. It is whirled through space by the force of gravity. This is the Earth, which is round-like-a-ball. The other is round-like-a-plate, and is moved at a more sedate pace by a team of elephants and a turtle. This is the Discworld.
>
> What they have in common is that each carries through the cosmos a cargo of conscious, imaginative – we could even say, charitably, intelligent – living species. Over the many centuries of their existence, these species have generated an accumulation of thoughts, information, emotions, beliefs and imaginings which envelops their world like a mental atmosphere, a *noonsphere.* Within the noonsphere patterns have formed, driven by the irresistible force of narrativium, the narrative imperative, the power of story. Some scholars call the patterns *motifs*, others *topoi*, others *memes*. The point is, they're there, everyone knows them, and they go on and on. More remarkably, some of the strongest can replicate themselves and go on drifting off across the multiverse as particles of inspiration, which leads to some truly amazing similarities between the Earth and Discworld. (Pratchett and Simpson 2014, 22)

The rest of the book just follows this line of thought, the similarities between what are presented as two equally real worlds are pointed out. Starting with the curious parallels between the cosmic carriers of the Disc, the Turtle and the four elephants, with the beliefs expounded in Hindu mythology; passing through the many gods whose connection with the classical mythology pantheons such as the Greek/Roman and Egyptian is undeniable; the resemblances between the beings described in ancient stories of the Nordic and Celtic cultures and those that are found roaming in Ankh-Morpork and the rest of the Disc;

mentioning monsters, witches, heroes and even wizards (who, as it is mentioned, would probably be offended at being included in a book about folklore); even such things as legends and cultural habits are compared; fittingly, the last chapter is dedicated to Death, and here no comparison is made, instead what is maintained is that the Earth and the Discworld share the same Death, whose "fashion choices" seem to be mostly based on European art of the Middle-Ages.

The aspects of *The Folklore of the Discworld* which it is most pertinent to mention for the present study, however, do not pertain to any specific instances, even to those about characters that will discussed further into the study, it is its sheer size. The edition used here, which is updated to include material on the Discworld books up to *Raising Steam*, the second to last novel, has more than 500 pages of analysis only. That is how much Terry Pratchett's work is influenced by myth, folklore and even popular culture.

The inspiration he draws from folklore is certainly an essential characteristic of Pratchett's writing, and one on which critics writing about him seem to focus, but it is not the only defining one. A critic that is a reference in fantasy criticism, and one who has been repeatedly quoted in this very study is Brian Atterby, but even though he considers Terry Pratchett an example to watch when regarding the retelling of myth in fantasy, when it comes to actually exploring the author's work Atterby does not have much to say. He does however mention another of the key aspects of Pratchett's genius: "In the hands of a Terry Pratchett (…), the fantastic is a glorious vehicle for satire on contemporary mores and institutions." (Atterby 2014, 4). Relevant as he is in the field, he is not the only one to draw a connection between Pratchett and satire:

> "[Providing writers with whole careers simply writing parodies of the form] is, indeed, a rich tradition, tolerated within the [fantasy] genre perhaps as a demonstration that its fans "can take a joke" but actually speaking to a much deeper cultural logic. (…) Terry Pratchett's important Discworld novels (1983-present) are [very] significant. These marvellous novels began as parodies of the Fritz Leiber/Robert E. Howard school of heroic barbarian, and although they developed into something more than mere parodies they remain profoundly in touch with the unique combination of wonder and ludicrousness at the heart of fantasy as a genre. (James and Mendlesohn 2012, 22)

Authors writing for volumes whose actual purpose is to explore criticism on fantasy literature such as *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, authors who write

specifically about Terry Pratchett, have similar comments: “at first, Pratchett simply ridicules the heroic tradition, but then he moves on to a complete and thorough reinvention.” (Haberkorn 2007, 319)

As is plain to see, when critics mention Pratchett the concept of satire, either explicitly or implicitly, never comes far behind. Furthermore, very often the word satire comes accompanied with the addendum that Pratchett is not simply satirical, at least not anymore. Essentially it is this “not anymore” that needs clarification, how Pratchett went from “satirist” to “not just a satirist”.

Before delving into Pratchett’s writing it should be clarified what the concepts of satire and parody are. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (4th ed.)*, by Chris Baldick, they are described as follows:

> Parody - A mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry. (…)
>
> Satire - A mode of writing that exposes the failings of individuals, institutions, or societies to ridicule and scorn. Satire is often an incidental element in literary works that may not be wholly satirical, especially in comedy. (…)

The first thing to take into account to understand satire in the context of Terry Pratchett’s Discworld series, then, is its sheer number of novels, and the time span during which they were published, which is 41 novels from 1983 to 2015. Furthermore, that number considers only actual novels, not other materials such as the *Science of Discworld* books, maps, the Discworld Atlas, or graphic novels, be them illustrated adaptations or original stories, or many others. These other materials will be extremely relevant to take into consideration further on, but when it comes to the evolution of satire in the series they bear little significance.

It is important, at this juncture, to stress the significance of this massive output throughout more than three decades because it is not possible to reduce Pratchett’s use of satire to a single analysis, what must be considered is the evolution of its use. If one reads *The Colour of Magic*, the first Discworld novel with its cowardly protagonist and then

skips forward to *Raising Steam*, the second-to-last, with its industrial innovations and extremist villains, one would hardly believe they were written by the same author if the same name did not appear on the cover. It would be risky to claim that the only difference between them is the way satire is used, or even that it is the main difference, but it certainly is a factor, and it is that mechanism, ever evolving in the hands of Sir Terry Pratchett, that concerns this particular portion of this dissertation.

To introduce the use of parody in Pratchett's writing, and particularly when mentioning *The Colour of Magic* specifically, it is worth considering the words of Gideon Haberkorn in his essay "Cultural Palimpsests: Terry Pratchett's New Fantasy Heroes", which deals with intertextuality in Pratchett:

> Traditions open up a space for both invention and repetition, and while the tradition of the modern fantasy hero is no doubt open for a wide range of inventions, there has been repetition — indeed, at times there has seemed to be naught but repetition: The army of heroes marching through fantasy novel after fantasy novel—far too frequently, fantasy trilogy after fantasy trilogy — often seems to come from a single mold: uniform, simplified, standardized. It is this sameness which Pratchett reacts against in his earlier Discworld novels, and he ridicules the imitations, among them the barbarian hero. The prime examples are arguably the barbarians Hrun and Cohen, the latter later leader of the Silver Horde, while Rincewind the wizard can be described as a kind of inverted hero. These three characters illustrate Pratchett's reaction against stereotypical fantasy heroes and his argument for their inadequacy. (Haberkorn 2007, 327)

As can be seen in the quote above, *The Colour of Magic* is often considered a parody, satirical in a fairly straightforward kind of way and it is in fact one of the main examples critics like to use to illustrate fantasy literature's ability to laugh at itself. What this means is that, while it does describe a beautifully constructed world which will go on to grow into something much more complex, this novel satirizes the fantasy genre, parodies it even. It flips the epic voyage, the central character is the very opposite of a hero: a wizard who is invariably described as cowardly and inept. In fact, Rincewind does not seem able to shake those two adjectives throughout his rather eventful career, regardless of how many courageous deeds and impressive feats he, usually by accident, manages to accomplish. Not only is the "hero" utterly non-heroic, the quest itself lacks any sort of noble intent: Rincewind is literally employed by a tourist, Twoflower, to show

him the sights and then events just happen. In many ways the plot of this novel is quite meagre, and one could argue that for the most part the events themselves are mere excuses to show off either the Discworld itself or many of its inhabitants, in all their satirical glory. It could be said that the first of the Discworld novels are designed to lead the reader in a sightseeing tour of the flat world resting on the backs of four elephants who stand on the back of the enormous cosmic turtle. In spite of all this, Pratchett does include a mechanism to explain why things "just happen" to Rincewind and Twoflower, and that is the games of the Gods. This is perhaps one of the most important details of this novel, the fact that it does not hide behind this fairly obvious parodical intent, it finds a way to explain why the events develop as they do, and that is something that will remain one of the most important characteristics of the Discworld novels.

Even though that remarkable foresight into what the Discworld novels would grow to become is extremely important to mention, that does not mean that it is not worth looking at certain examples of that "straightforward parody" that characterises the early Discworld novel. Being the actual first of the Discworld novels, *The Colour of Magic* is the perfect text to study closely to understand those satirical and/or parodical seeds. Its very structure, and not only the aforementioned design of the plot and storytelling mechanisms or the fact that one of the main characters is an actual tourist, gives credit to the theory that it is a sightseeing tour of sorts. The novel is comprised of four parts and one could argue that each of those parts is a short story in its own right because each has a plot that is initiated and resolved with barely any reference to events that happened in the previous ones, two of them even have their own prologue. The settings for those four parts are all fairly different, and each proposes to deal with different issues. By the same token each parodies different texts, or if not specific ones they at least invoke images that readers find, occasionally inexplicably, familiar.

The first part, which shares the title with the novel itself: "The Colour of Magic", after its prologue, opens with two men looking on at a burning city. They are waiting for the opportune moment to plunder it, and spot two riders in the distance, one quite decisive and the other comically inept. It is revealed that the inept rider was the one that caused the fire and the other one proceeds to tell that tale to the two mysterious figures. If not for

a comment or other exchanged among the characters this opening would be far from parodical and even quite close to what you would expect from a fantasy novel of that formulaic strain that has already been mentioned in the present study, but the story of how the fire started changes all that. Much of the effect of the story come s precisely from the fact that it starts as almost a complete cliché and then flips it, taking a reader who is not familiar with Terry Pratchett's writing of the Discworld (which at the date it was published would be every reader) completely by surprise. The first shock, in fact, comes even before the story of the fire is told, when Rincewind, one of the riders that is escaping the flaming city first addresses Bravd, one of the would-be thieves that await them:

> [Bravd] shifted his grip on his sword and (…) stepped onto the road with a hand held up and his face set in a grin nicely calculated to reassure yet threaten.
>
> 'Your pardon, sir-' he began.
>
> (…)
>
> 'Bugger off,' said [Rincewind].
>
> (…)
>
> 'He talks pretty big for a gutter wizard.' [Bravd] muttered.
>
> 'You don't understand at all,' said the wizard wearily. 'I'm so scared of you my spine has turned to jelly, it's just that I'm suffering from an overdose of terror right now. I mean, when I'm over that then I'll have time to be decently frightened of you.' (Pratchett 1983, 19-21)

This moment, when the apparent bravery of the apparent hero is revealed to be not courage but something so far into the cowardly end of a spectrum of bravery that it almost looks like courage, is when the cliché dies and the parodical side of the story emerges. This switch exemplifies almost perfectly how parody and satire will work throughout the Discworld novels, the apparent cliché that is turned upside down. Of course, in later works that switch, that satire, has a much deeper purpose than mere parody.

Furthermore, it is in this section that the first description of Ankh-Morpork, the greatest city in the multiverse "of which all the other cities of time and space are, as it were, mere reflections" (Pratchett 1983, 24) can be found. The Hub might be where the gods live and the literal centre of the Discworld, but the human (or human-ish) centre of the Discworld novels is without a question Ankh-Morpork and it should not go unmentioned that it is introduced in the very first section of the very first novel: this city

is the starting point. And when it comes to concepts like parody or satire Ankh-Morpork is not simple to take as a case study, it is all cities and none, it encompasses all cities, making readers think of the one they know best and yet has its own, and very distinctive, identity. This city, however, is too large, too complicated, and above all, too full, to be dealt with as just another instance of parody/satire in *The Colour of Magic*, as such, the way Ankh-Morpork society functions and its literary merits is an area to be explored at a later point in this dissertation.

The section that follows, "The Sending of Eight", is the one where the reader meets a Hero. Largely by means of satire, this section raises a number of issues, some of which are: the way protagonists in Fantasy tend to find themselves in near-death experiences a bit too often (one of the few running jokes/themes that made its way from the first section into the second); or the fact that in a fantastic world things as innocuous as trees tend to be doorways to unimaginably complex worlds; but the main thing to analyse here is the concept of the Barbarian Hero, and the gods that favour them. The figure of the Hero is a striking example of parody in Pratchett because its parodical existence is particularly obvious. And it is "Hero" with a capital H, as Pratchett and Simpson call them in *The Folklore of Discworld.* This capital H does not derive from the function regarding plot any such Hero has within the novels, but rather from what they actually are within the Discworld: an export of sorts from the Hublands, the freezing mountainous lands near the centre of the world. How these parodical figures emerge within the Discworld, however, is a subject that will be explored further along this dissertation. The words of an actual Barbarian Hero, Hrun, perhaps explain best why these Heroes are often quoted as examples of parody in Terry Pratchett's work:

> 'Oh,' said Hrun, 'I expect in a minute this dungeon door will be flung back and I'll be dragged off to some sort of temple arena where I'll fight maybe a couple of giant spiders and an eight-foot slave from the jungles of Klatch and then I'll rescue some sort of princess from the altar and then kill off a few guards or whatever and then this girl will show me a secret passage out of the palace and we'll liberate a couple of horses and escape with the treasure.'
>
> (…)
>
> 'All that?' said Twoflower.
>
> 'Usually.' (Pratchett 1983, 174)

It is not too great a leap, it is barely a step, in fact, to say that the inspiration behind Hrun and his ilk is Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian, a fact that is not lost in a number of critics, namely Gideon Haberkorn. Even though boiling down *The Colour of Magic*, or in some cases even Pratchett's writing in general, to a parody of Robert E. Howard, as some critics seem to do, is certainly overly simplistic, the character of Hrun does seem to serve that very purpose, as the quote above illustrates. However, as it can be seen in the quote by Haberkorn at the beginning of this argument, the true target might be those that tried to imitate Howard for commercial purposes rather than the source material. In any case, Hrun emerges as the archetypal hero of the fantasy novel, wholly aware of what he is and of the fact that the world provides him with the episodes and challenges to be what he is. This providence, in turn, is not explained away as a quirk of fate, indeed it is explained as a whim of Fate personified. Fate and all the other gods, who spend their time playing games with the inhabitants of the Disc. This instance of parody is just as worth mentioning since the gods meddling in the fate of heroes is the foundation of the classical epic poems. The petty, squabbling gods introduced in *The Colour of Magic* show that Pratchett is not merely mocking a relatively new genre, but rather that he wants to show a world with a consistent inner logic that is not afraid to embrace its own ludicrousness, stretching back to the very origins of fantasy writing. This is one of the defining traits of the Discworld, and its inhabitants: that what they are when it comes to "character types" is quite quickly, and in a manner far from subtle, revealed to the reader, and they might even behave as the reader would expect, but the story itself goes in a completely different direction. The section of *The Colour of Magic* that follows this first introduction of Hrun illustrates this perfectly.

That section is called "The Lure of the Wyrm". Again, many elements are introduced here, imagination being one of the most important, imagination not just as concept but as a driving force of the Discworld. Throughout the Discworld novels a recurrent notion to be explored is that if something can be imagined it must exist somewhere, including things that "everyone knows" don't or can't exist, a notion that begs the metafictional question "what if someone imagined me as well?". The Dragons of the Wyrmberg (an upside-down mountain) are the first occurrence of this notion, and

it is quickly explained that it is magic that turns imagination into reality, as the dragon Ninereeds explains to Twoflower:

> 'You mean I just thought of you and there you where?' [, said Twoflower.]
>
> *Yes*
>
> 'It was magic?'
>
> *Yes*
>
> 'But I've thought about dragons all my life!'
>
> *In this place the frontier between thought and reality is probably a little confused. All I know is that once I was not, and then you thought of me, and then I was.* (Pratchett 1983, 181)

What one can interpret from this explanation is that what is called magic in the Discworld is imagination invading reality due to a weak frontier. Even though these matters the novel seems to put up for the reader's consideration are not particularly satirical in themselves, the mechanism that is described is extremely important, because however ludicrous the satirical elements of the Discworld are, they are always accompanied by a logical explanation. Pratchett creates upside-down worlds, but he makes sure the reader understands why they are upside-down, and this is one of the earliest such explanations. The phrase "upside-down" has not been used so frequently in this particular paragraph by accident or carelessness, but because it is key to analyse "The Lure of the Wyrm". The first lines of the section describe the home of the dragons itself: "It was called the Wyrmberg and it rose almost one half of a mile above the green valley; a mountain huge, grey and upside down." In the previous sections there had already been quite a few things turned upside-down, but in this one the very plot seems to be reversed repeatedly: the hero (Hrun) is captured, but by a scantily clad lady (Liessa); the lady, in turn, claims she needs a champion to fight for her claim to the throne of the inverted mountain, but, truthfully, she hardly needs saving, being ruthless enough to have murdered her own father to gain it; that father, who has remained half alive, refusing to relinquish that throne is in fact quite proud of his daughter for having taken the initiative to kill him, being disappointed only at the fact that she has not yet dispatched her brothers; the hero, having been convinced to fight for his captor and winning is then "rescued" by the two inept sidekicks (Twoflower and Rincewind) and ends up losing out on his prize, who was to be the lady herself and her mountain. This strain of the plot of this section makes use of these inversions mainly to reverse gender roles. Considering only the

structure of the section one could argue that the main plot of the "Lure of the Wyrm" is the "romance/courting" between Liessa and Hrun, as the very title seems to hint at that conclusion. However, the fact that they are precisely those characters that are not the protagonists of the novel as a whole severely hinders that assessment. Nevertheless, this structure does validate the point that this novel reads more as four short stories with a few common themes and characters than a story with a single plot.

The inversions, however, do not pertain only to gender roles or to family dynamics in which people are proud of one another's murderous instincts. One other instance of satire in this section that not only beautifully illustrates this running theme of turning things and plotlines upside-down, but that has also the added bonus of being a brilliantly funny example of parody, is the magic sword threating the cowardly wizard to force him to act heroically. The last instance of what may be considered parodical inversion is in fact a switch. A more suitable way to describe that occurrence would be as outlandishly ludicrous rather than parodical or satirical, as the terms are defined at the beginning of this section. It should, nevertheless, be mentioned because it connects the initial premise that the dragons of the Wyrmberg exist because everything that can be imagined exists somewhere, with the notion that similarities are not coincidences, one that will become very important in the construction of the Discworld and its inhabitants and traditions, as can be seen in the analysis present in *The Folklore of the Discworld*. The occurrence itself is the largely unexplained transportation of Rincewind, Twoflower and even the Luggage (Twoflower's magic chest, which follows him everywhere, literally everywhere, even to other worlds and dimensions) to an airplane, an airplane that is being hijacked. One Dr Rjinswand, in the confusion of being Rincewind the Wizard as well, thwarts this hijacker and then remembers he is a specialist in physics and that moments before his newfound friend, one Jack Zweiblumen, who bears a striking resemblance to Twoflower, had taken ill. The scene ends with the Luggage finding the tourist and the wizard and with the wizard's alternate-self wishing fervently to be somewhere else. The point of this scene is hardly the episode itself, although accidental heroics seem to be quite characteristic of Rincewind, regardless of what reality, or world, he is inhabiting at the moment. The point is that somewhere there was another Rincewind with another Twoflower, quite as real as

the characters the reader has been following, and that it was to that reality/dimension/universe/world that they were transported. The point is that imagination and magic merely create a bridge between things that already exist somewhere.

The last section of *The Colour of Magic* is titled "Close to the Edge", it has several aspects that should be highlighted parody/satire-wise, and almost all of them have to do precisely with the word "edge". One, however, pertains mostly with the overall structure of the novel, and that is the appearance of the embodiment of the Lady, who the reader is led to believe is in fact Lady Luck in spite of the fact that that is never stated, along with the conversation between Death and Fate. Aside from Death's initial stalking of Rincewind and the occasional conversation between characters referring to previous events, there was nothing among the events that could lead the reader to see a connecting plotline between sections. In this section, however, the reader is given to understand that the game between the Lady and Fate, the one that had seen them become the only two remaining players in "The Sending of Eight", has been in full play for the entirety of Rincewind and Twoflower's adventures. The short scenes that provide that information do not overshadow the events and themes that have been discussed or put into focus in the four sections, they merely explain why things keep happening to the protagonists. Often, series of books that depict adventures of the same group of characters make the reader think why absolutely everything happens to them and not to someone else, begging the question "is Fate picking on them?", in this case Fate really is picking on these characters. By the same token readers also might ask themselves how the aforementioned heroes keep beating seemingly unbeatable odds, why they are so lucky when it really counts, and the answer here is that Lady Luck herself is helping them. This form of parody is quite typical of Pratchett, embracing the cliché and satirizing it not by simply ridiculing it put by explaining it. Aside from that, the key-word in "Close to the Edge" really is "edge". The first contact the characters (and the reader) have with the edge, or Rim, aside from the rapidly shrinking horizon, is physical, they collide with it, with the Circumfence. The pun behind that name is rather self-explanatory, the Circumfence is a fence that covers part of the circumference of the Discworld. This fence itself is one of the shining examples of pure logic at work in an illogical world: a culture (Krull) that develops at the

edge of the world sees many resources going over it and becoming lost forever, and that is just plain wasteful, so they build a net to catch those valuable items, and the occasional living-being, and thus become one of the most, for lack of a better world, resourceful societies on the Disc. By the same logic, if you have a society that lives at the edge of the world they will immediately become preoccupied with what lies beyond, or in the case of the Discworld, underneath, which leads to the inevitable creation of some sort of space exploration program. The imagery of the space explorer going beyond the edge of the known world is not subtle. What it is is once again twisted, the explorers are called chelonauts rather than astronauts, because they don't wish to learn about stars (*astro* being the Greek word for star) but about turtles (*chelóna* being the Greek word for turtle), or more specifically about the gender of one specific turtle: Great A'Tuin, the World Turtle. As has been stated, at the edge what one mostly finds is a nice view of what lies beyond, and for Twoflower that means more worlds, in his own simple words upon seeing the model of the observable universe created by the Krullians:

> 'All those worlds!' said Twoflower. 'It's fantastic!' (Pratchett 1983, 265)

Twoflower really is the quintessential tourist, he wants to see (and take pictures of) absolutely everything there is, and everything there is does not end with the edge of the world. To further illustrate this, Pratchett introduces the character of Tethis, a sea troll who is literally from another world, someone who has fallen off the edge of his home world. The concept of falling off the edge is the one that punctuates the novel and completes the anti-quest of the protagonists. Historically, ancient travellers would fear the edge of the world and brave explorers proposed to search for it and what they actually discovered was that the world had no edge. It does seem fitting that in a world that actually is flat, the end of a voyage that is riddled with events that seem to be progressing in the expected manner and then take the strangest possible turn consists of the protagonists literally going over the edge.

As has been mentioned above, this novel should not be taken as the paramount example of satire in Pratchett, but as its crib. As the world grows and plot-lines develop, satire becomes more of a tool than an objective. For the most part small satirical elements

either contribute to the whimsicality of the world itself, or, a function that should not be looked down on, for comedic effect. That comic relief is a major aspect of the novels, it is part of their parodical nature. As they describe a world that should not take itself too seriously, it makes sense that even in a scene that can only be described as apocalyptical, where the characters are quite certain hat the world is facing complete annihilation, there is still room for a joke:

> 'Yes, yes,' said Bethan, sitting down glumly. '(…) Rincewind, all the shops have been smashed open. There was a whole bunch of people across the street helping themselves to musical instruments, can you believe that?'
>
> 'Yeah,' said Rincewind (…). 'Luters, I expect.' (Pratchett 1986, 238)

This early example, present in the second novel: *The Light Fantastic*, is a very good example of the place parody will eventually have in the world that is being created. By the time *Raising Steam* arrives the faithful reader will regard the parodical/satirical nature of some elements of the story as just part of the way the world is, like the colour of the sky, or the (remarkably slow) speed of light. The more mature and demanding plotlines and characters end up even rejecting some of those elements that were introduced early on either with parodical intent or simply for a laugh:

> 'What exactly has Cohen the Barbarian done that is *heroic*?' [said Lord Vetinari]. 'I seek only to understand.'
>
> 'Well… you know… heroic deeds…'
>
> 'And they are…?'
>
> 'Fighting monsters, defeating tyrants, stealing rare treasures, rescuing maidens… that sort of thing,' said Mr Betteridge vaguely. 'You know… heroic things.'
>
> 'And who, precisely, defines the monstrousness of the monsters and the tyranny of the tyrants?' said Lord Vetinari, his voice suddenly like a scalpel – not vicious like a sword, but probing its edge into vulnerable places.
>
> Mr Betteridge shifted uneasily. 'Well… the hero I suppose.'
>
> 'Ah. And the theft of these rare items… I think the word that interests me here is the term "theft", an activity frowned on by most of the world's major religions, is it not? The feeling stealing over me is that *all* these terms are defined by the hero. You could say: I am a hero, so when I kill you that makes you, *de facto*, the kind of person suitable to be killed by a hero. You could say that a hero, in short, is someone who indulges every whim that, within the rule of law, would have him behind bars or swiftly dancing what I believe is

known as the hemp fandango. The words *we* might use are: murder, pillage, theft and rape. Have I understood the situation?' (Pratchett 2001, 20)

As this quote demonstrates some of the satirical roots are brought into new lights as the series progresses. In the example above, Vetinari questions the way heroes are perceived on the Disc. Whereas in earlier novels, regardless of their opinion of them, no character seemed to question the status of the hero, some like Twoflower are in awe of them, others think of them as people of action rather lacking in intelligence, but none question that they are heroes, here Vetinari challenges the entire concept.

Raising Steam is, perhaps, the best novel to look at to see where this satirical evolution ended since it is the last Discworld Novel outside the Tiffany Aching series. This series of novels, in spite of being set in the flat world as well, is written in a different fashion, claiming to be for "young adults" as is *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents*. It is set in the Chalk, a rather secluded piece of land where, conveniently, characters keep to themselves and to their own, allowing for different methods of storytelling and indeed storylines with a somewhat more innocent outlook. Since the writing of the novels for "young adults" is so different from that of the novels for "children of all ages" (all those that are not for "young adults" and tend to star inhabitants of that jewel of satire that is the twin city of Ankh-Morpork), particularly when it comes to satire, the language and themes that pertain to them will not be discussed in this study. As such the last Morporkian Discworld novel is indeed *Raising Steam.*

If truth be told, most, if not all, satirical elements present in *Raising Steam* are recycled from other stories and furthermore they are shown to have been somewhat tamed along the way. They have become just part of the way society is and works in the Discworld and more specifically in Ankh-Morpork. The sheer number of characters and places that are mentioned in this novel is a fact that will be addressed a little further along in this section of the dissertation, but what should be mentioned at this juncture is that so many elements that were previously introduced in the Discworld series were revisited that it would not be feasible to analyse them all. As such, four elements present in this novel will be compared with their origins, two that were introduced very early on in the series and have been quite prominent throughout it, another that had been introduced before as more of a secondary joke but that is one of the main focuses of *Raising Steam* itself, and

one that became a major element towards the end of the series. Those elements are: the Guild System of Ankh-Morpork, the Staff at Unseen University, Harry King and his business, and the innovative Clacks.

The Guilds were introduced very early in the first novel, the full scene being in pages 72-76:

> 'Won't you join me, Zlorf?' [said Ymor, the thiefmaster,] levelly. (…)
>
> The president of the Assassin's Guild spun his short blowgun dexterously and slotted it into its holster in one smooth movement.
>
> (…) Promotion in the Assassin's Guild was by competitive examination, the Practical being the most important – indeed, the only – part. (…)
>
> 'One step more and you'll leave here with fewer eyeballs than you came with,' said the thiefmaster. 'So sit down and have a drink, Zlorf, and let's talk about this sensibly. *I* thought we had an agreement. You don't rob – I don't kill. Not for payment, that is,' he added after a pause.
>
> Zlorf took the proffered beer.
>
> 'So?' he said. 'I'll kill him. Then you rob him. (…)
>
> Zlorf and Ymor stared up at the figure on the threshold. It was short, fat and richly dressed. Very richly dressed. (…)
>
> 'Who's that?' said Zlorf.
>
> 'I know him,' said Ymor. 'His name's Rerpf. He runs the Groaning Platter tavern down by Brass Bridge.(…)
>
> 'What do you want?' said Ymor.
>
> 'I am here on behalf of the Guild of Merchants and Traders,' said Rerpf evenly. 'To protect our interests you might say. (…)'
>
> 'I'm sorry,' [said Ymor]. 'I thought I heard you say the Guild of Merchants?'
>
> 'And traders,' agreed Rerpf. (…)
>
> 'How long has this – Guild – been inexistence, may I ask?' [said Ymor].
>
> 'Since this afternoon,' said Rerpf. 'I'm vice-guildmaster in charge of tourism, you know.' (Pratchett 1983 72-76)

This scene is the first contact the reader has with the ever-growing circus that is the mass of Guilds that Ankh-Morpork holds. *The Colour of Magic* introduces three guilds, even though at least one of them, the Guild of Thieves, is not exactly official at the time, but the final tally, by the time of *Raising Steam*, is about ten times that number, some of the most prominent being the Guild of Lawyers, which is led by a zombie, the Guild of

Beggars, which is the richest in Ankh-Morpork (beggars hardly ever spend what they gain), and the Fool's Guild, which is arguably the saddest building in the city. One of the main things that Lord Havelock Vetinari did as Patrician of Ankh-Morpork was to legitimize the Guild System. The Guild of Thieves is perhaps the most interesting instance to observe. Fairly early in the series it is revealed that Vetinari has made robbing legal, there are two catches though: only licensed Guild thieves can legally rob, and citizens can purchase security from the said licensed thieves. Unlicensed thieves, in turn, are dealt with, quite cruelly, by the Guild itself. This system allows for the city to regulate itself in several respects. Not all respects, which will give rise to the usefulness of the City Watch, but the evolution of that particular institution is the focus of a different chapter in this dissertation. In *Raising Steam* this mushroom-like tendency of the Guild concept has stabilized and their leaders are quite simply presented as a major part of the high-society of Ankh-Morpork.

Much like the city of Ankh-Morpork itself the way Unseen University works on a day-to-day basis changes throughout the series, the reasons behind those somewhat drastic changes come down to a key figure, that of a leader. In the case of the first that figure is, of course, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork: Lord Havelock Vetinari, who, despite being in power already during the events of *The Colour of Magic*, is referred to as the main cause for the taming of Ankh-Morpork. In the case of the latter that figure is Mustrum Ridcully, who is not in power as Archchancellor, or even present at UU, during the events of the first few novels. Two quotes may illustrate best this shift in the University, one from *The Light Fantastic*, the second Discworld novel, and the other from *Raising Steam*:

> Promotion was slow in a profession that traditionally bestowed long life, and it was accepted that younger wizards would frequently seek advancement via dead men's curly shoes, having previously emptied them of their occupants. (Pratchett 1986, 21)

It does not take much imagination to see the habit described in the quote above as a somewhat morbid allegory for tenure. The school for wizards is after all a University, regardless of how young the students are at the start of their career there. As such the possibility that the typical wizard of Unseen University may be a not too flattering avatar for a certain kind of career academic should not be readily discarded. Regardless of what

exactly they parody it is quite clear that some of the main ingredients for the personality of the Discworld wizard are: a fair amount of self-importance, arrogance and a more than slight tendency for inertia, and most importantly an absolute need to be perceived as wise. They do not quite seem to shake off that initial description, but by the end of the series they do seem to earn that claim to wisdom. To understand the following quote, which illustrates this, a small measure of context may be needed: the two participants in the following conversation are Mustrum Ridcully, the longest reigning Archchancellor Unseen University has seen in centuries, and the experienced History Monk Lu-Tze, or "the Sweeper" as he is reverentially called by his order:

> Lu-Tze looked carefully at the range of brandies on the Archchancellor's heaving, creaking drinks trolley and sat back. Ridcully, his pipe smoking like the funnel of Iron Girder [a train], said, 'How nice to see you, my old friend. It's all about locomotion, yes?'
>
> 'Of course, Mustrum – is there anything else to talk about? (…) But even the Abbot is disturbed about the arrival of steam engines when it isn't steam-engine time.'
>
> Ridcully poked at his pipe with a pipe cleaner and said, 'Ye-es, that is a conundrum. Surely the steam engine *cannot* happen before it is steam-engine time? If you saw a pig, you would, I think, say to yourself, well, here's a pig, so it must be time for pigs. You wouldn't question its right to be there, would you?'
>
> 'Certainly not,' said Lu-Tze. 'In any case, pork gives me the wind something dreadful. What we know is that the universe is a never-ending story that, happily, writes itself continuously. The trouble with my brethren in Oi Dong is that they are fixated on the belief that the universe can be totally understood, in every particular jot and tittle.'
>
> Ridcully burst out laughing. 'Oh, my word! You know, my wonderful associate Mister Ponder Stibbons appears to have fallen under the same misapprehension. It seems that even the very wise have neglected to take notice of one rather important goddess… Pippina, the lady with the Apple of Discord. She knows that the universe, while it requires rules and stability, also needs just a tincture of chaos, the unexpected, the surprising. Otherwise it would be a mechanism – a wonderful mechanism, ticking away the centuries, but with nothing *different* happening. And so we may assume that the loss of balance will be allowed this time and the beneficent lady will decree that this mechanism might yield wonderful things, given a chance.' (Pratchett 2013, 140-141)

This quote illustrates much more than just how wizards evolve throughout the series. This dialogue muses on the ephemerality of the universe and on how the surprising and unexpected is what ends up giving sense to order. It is one of those passages, and

there are not few in this novel, that make it feel like it is revisiting every theme, character and place that the series has broached. The conclusion is really quite simple: that sometimes plain old-fashioned common sense demonstrates a great deal more wisdom than overly-intellectualizing or complicating matters unnecessarily.

The next element to consider is Harry King, and as ever Terry Pratchett's own words are the best starting point to discuss his characters: "Sir Harry King was pondering on the business of the day. He was widely known as the King of the Golden River because of the fortune he had made minding other people's business. (Pratchett 2013, 31). Harry King is not a major player in the Discworld series as a whole, but he is one in this "last" novel. Since the Discworld is first and foremost a world, and one with apparently endless possibilities, it obviously has a similarly immense spectrum of themes for storytelling and characters through whom to tell those stories. Usually those themes and those sets of characters are closely connected, as the following chapters in this dissertation will demonstrate, and that means that by *Raising Steam* readers expect the novels to be about certain themes because they have certain characters in the foreground. Taking that into consideration, the fact that Harry King is one of the main characters in this becomes extremely significant. There are several important possible reasons for this, not least of which is the fact that if the novel is partially focused on a character that in spite of being quite familiar has not been particularly explored, the reader will not readily associate the novel with a particular theme, which would have been highly likely to happen if the same story had been told exclusively from the point of view of Moist Von Lipwig or Samuel Vimes. Nevertheless, it is perhaps more important to focus on what Harry King actually represents in Ankh-Morpork and that is: hard work, and not being afraid to get his hands dirty. This man is one of the richest beings in Ankh-Morpork (second perhaps to Queen Molly of the Beggars Guild) and like the quote states, even if it is euphemistically, he has made that fortune by charging a meagre amount to collect the refuse from people's houses and reselling it to interested parties, the "Golden River" is in fact almost all the urine in Ankh-Morpork. Harry King is introduced as a success story from the start and he remains largely unchanged until the end, apart from a knighthood and a pending title (one of the lures that Moist uses to coax him into action being the title of Baron, the fact that Moist

has no authority to do it being of little importance), what evolves is the way he is presented. On a first introduction, Harry's business, pun always intended, is there for a laugh, the dirty man being so much richer than "proper gentlemen" is just the sort of joke that characterises Pratchett, first making the reader laugh with puns tittering on the line between proper and just plain rude, and severely tilting towards the latter, and then making them realize that King is successful because he is clever, hardworking, and not afraid to do things others think of as being beneath them. In *Raising Steam* Sir Harry[2] is an entrepreneur, plain and simple, he has more money than anyone could need and wants to put it to a good use instead of hoarding it (like Queen Molly). Of course the odd "business" joke still emerges, but after getting to know the character and his inner-most motivations they become irrelevant.

The last element to be analysed at this point is the concept of the "Clacks", the long-distance communication system, the system's first appearance going back to *The Fifth Elephant*:

> Colon pulled a couple of round, white-painted paddles from his belt, sighted on the Watch House semaphore tower peeking over the top of the old lemonade factory, waited until the watching gargoyle signalled him, and with a certain amount of verve and flair ripped off an impression of a man with stiff arms playing two games of table tennis at once.
>
> (…)
>
> A little further along the street two trolls were carefully clamping a hay wagon. After a minute or two one of them happened to glance at the Watch House tower, nudged his colleague, produced two bats of his own and, with rather less elan than Sergeant Colon, sent a signal. When it was answered the trolls looked around, spotted Colon and lumbered towards him.
>
> 'Ta-da!' said Colon proudly.
>
> 'Amazing, this new technology,' said All Jolson admiringly. 'And they must've been, what, forty or fifty yards away?'
>
> ''s'right, All. In the old days I'd've had to blow a whistle. And they'll arrive here knowin' it was *me* who wanted 'em, too.'
>
> 'Instead of having to look and see it was you,' said Jolson.

[2] It might also be useful to point out that Sir Harry and Sir Terry sound quite similar, so a theorizing that Harry King is some sort of avatar for the author, particularly given his importance in the realization of the railway, might not be totally ridiculous.

> ‘Well, yeah,’ said Colon, aware that what had transpired might not be the brightest ray of light in the new dawn of the communications revolution. ‘Of course, it’d have worked just as well if they’d been streets away. On the other side of the city, even. And if I told the gargoyle to, as we say, “put” it on the “big” tower over on the Tump they’d have got it in Sto Lat within minutes, see?’
>
> ‘And that’s twenty miles.’ (Pratchett 1999, 17-18)

As a rule of thumb in the Discworld novels if you want a comical introduction to a concept, particularly one related to technology, just leave it to Fred Colon. The Sergeant just has an innate ability to put a brilliant idea to its most inappropriate use possible. This example is here at this point of this study, instead of on the chapter further along that most closely connects with the “communications revolution” mentioned in the quote above, because it perfectly illustrates the way Pratchett sometimes purposefully introduces concepts that will grow to be immensely important within the Discworld in a fashion verging on the ridiculous.

By *Raising Steam* this light-hearted, silly even, introduction to the semaphore technology, the “clacks”, is but a distant memory, and they are now an immensely complex network at the peak of its efficiency that reaches the farthest reaches of the Disc.

Even though in a variety of ways *Raising Steam* provides a counterpoint to the early Discworld novels, in one particular way it also mirrors *The Colour of Magic*. It ends up being another tour of the Discworld. Unlike most other novels this one does not have a proper protagonist, or an antagonist either. Many of the others, most even, do not have particularly heroic central characters either, nor are the forces that oppose those characters simplistically evil, so there should be no talk of heroes and villains. Still, often there are confrontations between characters or groups of characters that play the role of the hero and characters or groups of characters that play the role of the villain. This, I argue, is not the case with *Raising Steam*. The true hero is an idea, the endeavour of connecting the furthest reaches of the Disc to one another, illustrated of course by the ingenious young engineer, the cunningly resourceful con-man made honest that is Moist Von Lipwig, the enterprising investor that is Harry King, the no-nonsense tactician-copper that is Sam Vimes and even the master manipulator that is the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Havelock Vetinari himself. And the true villain is the backwards thinking that will always oppose

progress, illustrated by the extremist Dwarves, the Grags and those they so easily manipulate. Taking these two factions as the two major players of the story, and the victory of the hero over the villain, it is possible to interpret that the purpose of the final story about the Discworld is to leave every part of it literally connected, to leave it whole, fully grown, mature. At this point the subject of the number of characters that make an appearance should be revisited, it is not just the fact that at one point or another virtually all inhabitants of the city appear. A fun appearance from familiar characters slightly out of place is a common enough occurrence in the series, but there seems to be a conscious effort to put as many references to characters from all around the Disc as possible. Sometimes it would seem too forced to actually have the characters present, but in that case the name of a place or some other hint is dropped, the end result being that a habitual reader will be left with the feeling that there has been a throwback to every single character they have gotten to know on the flat world[3]. Adding the fact that so many characters that had "starred" in their own novels make an appearance to the sense of maturation that is present in *Raising Steam* it could be read as a farewell novel. If it was indeed intended as a farewell, then the parallels with *The Colour of Magic*, and other "first" novels should be read in a different way, that of granting closure to the characters (and faithful readers, as a matter of fact). These "first" novels include some that will be looked at closely in this study such as: *Mort*, *Guards! Guards!* or *Going Postal*, but many others that will not be studied in this dissertation marked the beginning of characters' journeys. *Raising Steam* may not represent the end of every single one of those journeys, but it certainly signals it for a great number of them. Given the failing health of the author at the time the book was written (one might go as far as to say impending death if some

[3] Some of the most significant characters for the Discworld series in *Raising Steam* are: Moist von Lipwig (and Adora Belle); Lord Vetinari (and Drumknott); Harry King (and Effie); Sam Vimes (and Sybill and the Watch); Dick Simmel; Rhys Rhysson (and her court). Queen Keli of Sto Lat; Lady Margolotta of Bonk; Sacharissa Cripslock (and William de Worde and *The Ankh-Morpork Times*); Ridcully (and Rincewind and the rest of the UU teaching staff; Death (who has remarkably few appearances). Other characters are merely mentioned such as: the Nac Mac Feegle, the King of Lancre and the witches. Besides characters there are also other references, such as the country of Djelibeiby.

subtlety wasn't warranted), the possibility that those parallels are by design should not be ignored.

1.1.3 Importance of Fantasy Literature

One of the first issues critics tend to address when dealing with fantasy is the fact that the genre itself is not taken seriously by the community in general. Relevant statements include the following:

> Classical Philosophers tore a hole in western critical consciousness when they established their negative attitude toward their traditional mythology (Hume 1984, xii)
>
> Fantasy has generally been excluded from the canon o great literature (Atterby 1992, ix)
>
> Whether it is seen as threatening or trivial, fantasy is all too often ignored by serious readers of fiction. (…) it is not easy to explain the marginalization of fantastic literature on grounds of merit (Atterby 1992, x)
>
> Fantasy makes many adults uneasy. (Pratchett 1993a, 2)

This idea might not be explicit too often anymore, not every critic is as outspoken as Terry Pratchett after all, and, as there has definitely been an increase in the popularity of the genre, it has become more widely acknowledged. Volumes like *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, for example, seem to discuss their subject matter as relevant only in the field of criticism of fantasy literature, rather than literary criticism in general:

> What [Farah Mendlesohn's schema, which proposes four distinct modes of fantasy,] offers is a way of considering fantasy on its own terms rather than the terms used by critics of mimetic fiction. (James and Mendlesohn 2012, 3)

Nevertheless, that in itself shows that to a certain extent fantasy literature has always been somewhat segregated, and that it still is, even if to a lesser extent. Efforts to assert fantasy's relevance as a literary mode are still being made. The purpose for these efforts is almost irrelevant, they may intend to combat an explicit, and still prevailing opinion that fantasy is not worthy of critical acclaim or they may not, but they exist:

> Fantasy is fundamentally playful – which does not mean that it is not serious. Its way of playing with symbols encourages the reader to see meaning as something unstable and elusive, rather than single and self-evident. (Atterby 2014, 2)
>
> This book endeavours to take the body of genre fantasy on a multiplicity of terms that recognizes academic, reader and commercial understandings of fantasy as equally valuable. (James and Mendlesohn 2012)

In very different ways, both Atterby and James and Mendlesohn appear to believe that critics often fail to truly understand what the focus of studying fantasy should be, be it by considering that it is not "serious" or by employing perspectives that are too narrow, perspectives that may even neglect the casual or non-academic reader. This possibly implicit belief, however, is ultimately irrelevant. What is significant is that both opinions clearly state that fantasy should in fact be taken seriously and that it should be considered from a wide range of perspectives, that it should be enjoyed, both for its literary value and for the enjoyment they provide.

> And Fantasy is Fun. For those attuned to its charms, fantasy can be a game with endlessly varied outcomes and a vacation for the weary soul – and neither amusement nor escape is anything to condemn or undervalue. (Atterby 2014, 4)
>
> Like the fairy tales that were its forebears, fantasy needs no excuses. (Pratchett 1993a, 4)

This brings us to another word that seems to be quite present in fantasy criticism: escapism. As can easily be interpreted by Atterby's words quoted above, escapism may be, in other circles, "condemned" and "undervalued", but that is not the prevalent opinion among the critics quoted in this essay. In fact, Pratchett himself has some fairly strong views on that matter:

> As for escapism, I'm quite happy about the word. There is nothing wrong with escapism. The key points of consideration, though, are what you are escaping from, and where you are escaping to. (Pratchett 1993a, 2-3)

Critics often sidestep this massive characteristic of fantasy. The *Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, for instance, is a very comprehensive volume, including chapters that deal with historical antecedents, ways of reading, and even with how certain clusters of authors can be found within the genre as being closely connected to one another. As such it is a fairly good example of the way fantasy criticism is being written and dealt with. In it one can find chapters that deal with the construction of fantasy

worlds, and even how the reader may become familiarized with a set of characters, but the issue of how fantasy can create an imaginative alternate space to which the reader can escape is not in the foreground. Authors like Atterby mention this, but obliquely, in such words as can be seen quoted above. Critics analyse the minutiae of fantasy writing, but it is authors like Pratchett who truly emphasize the effect an alternate reality where everything is possible can have on a reader. And when discussing the importance of fantasy this particular aspect should be emphasized.

But perhaps the most important aspect to be stressed regarding the importance of fantasy goes back to the very purpose of the present study. Changing the rules of storytelling gives the writer almost limitless freedom, and although that might be fun, and enjoyable, that is not its only purpose. Fantasy can use that enjoyment to hide important issues in plain view, it can use the whimsical and the comical to deal with the polemic and worrisome.

In more analytical works, such as *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, this attitude may not be explicit in the words of the editors, who merely assert that fantasy deserves to be analysed "on its own terms". This certainly implies that it has at least as much potential as mimetic fiction to deal with worthwhile issues, but it does not compare the two types of work. Other critics however, such as Brian Atterby, do touch on this subject quite extensively. In *Strategies of Fantasy*, he dedicates an entire chapter to volumes with this particular concern:

> Finally, in chapter 8, I attempt to deal with stories that explicitly challenge the division between reality and imagination, not by saying that fantasy is real but by implying that reality requires something like fantasy to give structure to its otherwise random and inexplicable events. (Atterby 1992, xiii)

The idea that fantasy is a particularly useful tool when it comes to understanding reality is one Atterby develops even further in *Stories about Stories*, firstly by stating that fantasy can deal with the same issues as other kinds of narrative:

> For other kinds of narrative, those problems may have to do with justice, gender, race, identity, and so on. Fantasy can deal with any of these, but every fantasy also proposes a different way of bringing the strange, the magical, the numinous into modern life. (Atterby 2014, 3-4)

And then by stating that the very fact that fantasy is non-factual from the start is what gives it freedom to tell so many different things without forcing an absolute conclusion onto the reader:

> [Fantasy] denies its own validity; the one characteristic shared by all fantasy narratives is their nonfactuality. The fundamental premise of fantasy is that the things it tells not only did not happen but could not have happened. In that literal untruth is freedom to tell many symbolic truths without forcing a choice among them. (Atterby 2014, 4)

Atterby does not mention only the advantages of fantasy when it comes to its writing. The fact that it allows for both a great range of themes and the freedom to do so in a way that does not force an immediate conclusion is one of the most important contributions it can have for literature. But that is only half the story. The effect it can have on readers is just as important.

> By telling stories about, around, and upon mythic stories, we put ourselves onto the same stage with the gods and heroes and monsters and thus are forced to confront our godlike, heroic, and monstrous selves. (Atterby 2014, 4)

And this effect needs not only be felt by the individual:

> I hope to show that one reason for [Fantasy's] importance is [its] capacity for mythopoeiesis: the making of narratives that reshape the world. (Atterby 2014, 8)

This is the main reason for fantasy's potential to have such an impact in literature, how it can reshape the real issues faced by real people into something that is enjoyable to read, something that is impossible, but nevertheless relatable, something that makes the reader ponder about an issue, rather than stating it. Critics may understand this dimension of fantasy, and they may even explain and analyse it quite eloquently, but authors tend to have a way with words that find their way better into the part of the readers' minds where understanding resides. Thus, there is no better way to punctuate this theme with Terry Pratchett's own words, even if they have already been used above to illustrate another point:

> [W]hat people generally have in mind when they hear the word fantasy (…) can indeed be pretty silly. Yet fantasy also speculates about the future, rewrites the past and reconsiders the future. It plays games with the universe. ("Let there be Dragons", Terry Pratchett 1993)

1.2. Visualizing a "New" World

> For what Discworld is, more than anything else, is… logical. Relentlessly, solidly logical. The reason it is fantasy is that it is logical about the wrong things, about those parts of human experience where, by tactic agreement, we don't use logic because it doesn't work properly. (Pratchett 2000, 160)
>
> Or, to put it another way, here is a setting where literary genres and social movements can be satirized, gently or savagely, according to need, and where Pratchett's constant linguistic and philosophical awareness, not to say cynicism, can be matched against the 'real' world. (Hunt 2001, 116)

Before exploring some themes dealt with in Terry Pratchett's Discworld one needs first to understand how it works, and why it is possible for anything to happen in it, why the author can take any subject: be it sensitive and polemic, political, philosophical, social, personal, religious, technological or indeed just plain old-fashioned funny little adventures, and bring them to the foreground dressed up in fantastic costumes.

The real world is complex, and the best way to mimic it, be it for satirical purposes or not, is to create another world just as complex. And of course it helps if you throw some magic in as well, because that way you are not bound by restricting little things such as reality. Pratchett's own views on critical conceptualizations of fantasy, particularly when it comes to using the phrase "magical realism", have been made quite clear. However, in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, we find that to a degree, magical realism can help understand some key points in creating imaginary worlds. The two editors have the following to say about the magical realist texts, which do not include Pratchett, they analyse in their study: "the supernatural [in the texts] is not a simple or obvious matter, but it *is* an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism." (Zamora and Faris, 1995)

It would seem that the Discworld would be a prime example of this, as it is so carefully constructed, were it not for the fact that the author would strongly object to being analysed under the guise of magical realism. In any case it is that careful construction that concerns this particular section of this dissertation. However, given the output of Discworld-related materials that exists, the analysis made in this section will

focus on them, rather than on any established critical approach. Even if the analysis made here is not based on the work of other authors, several conclusions will go along with several pieces of fantasy criticism that have already been mentioned in this dissertation, particularly those relating to the usefulness of creating a magical world to critique the non-fictional one (Brian Atterby's words in his introduction of *Stories about Stories* being a key instance).

The best part about the materials in question is that they were all born from the brilliant mind of Sir Terry himself, with some aid from a number of experts (another writer and two illustrators). A meticulous reading undoubtedly corroborates what can be observed in the maps and illustrations, or what is stated in the books that look at the Discworld from a more scientific standpoint, but if the objective is to understand how the Discworld works these materials are a definite visual advantage. Probably, the best place to start when analysing how a world is is to actually look at it. And when the creator of that world, Terry Pratchett, has collaborated with a detail-oriented colleague, Stephen Briggs, to bring about an accurate visualization of that world then all that is needed is to find a suitable illustrator, Stephen Player, and that looking is made all the easier. The true spirit of the creative process that led to a number of maps that depict not only the Disc as a whole but other key parts of it is captured in the words of Stephen Briggs present in his introduction to the Discworld Mapp:

> I showed draft #1 to Terry, who looked at it for some time and said 'Do you know what a rain shadow is?' This was new to me (…). I was given a short lecture on mountain ranges and prevailing rain-bearing winds, which gently led to the fact that I'd put the Great Nef, the driest place in the world, in what would have been a very large swamp. (Pratchett and Briggs 1995, 3-4)

For Pratchett magic is not an excuse for things to feel wrong. It was extremely important to him that the map(p) felt real and plausible. Magic holds the world together ensuring that it is a world that works as such. How magic hinders the proper functioning of physics in the Discworld, however, is the focus of a later part of this section, one which deals with the aptly named series of books called *The Science of Discworld.*

The first Map to be made depicting the Discworld, in 1993, was not of the Disc itself, but of its political and cultural epicentre, the city of Ankh-Morpork. the name of

the map is *The Streets of Ankh-Morpork*, but the cover provides further information (see figure 4 in the Annexes).

From the start this presentation puts the reader in mind of something that might actually be found in Ankh-Morpork, and this is something to keep in mind considering this is the first of several materials that will be produced throughout the years. This city map marks the first visual collaboration between Pratchett and Briggs, and in truth the author himself seems to have his fair share of misgivings as to how advisable it was to actually give shape to a city that lives in the imagination of so many different individuals, himself included: "It's not *completely* accurate. It can't be. The only accurate map is the one inside my head, and yours." Briggs and Pratchett 1993. Perfectly accurate or not, the map is certainly worth reading (see figure 5 in the Annexes).

The last words in Stephen Brigg's introduction to *The Streets of Ankh-Morpork* are: "[Designing the Ankh-Morpork map] had taken almost a year. Never again, I said – but – the Discworld? Now that would be a great adventure…". Sure enough, two years later Pratchett and Briggs launched themselves on that adventure and in that time Pratchett's opinion about the "fossilization of the imagination" shifts ever so slightly:

> After an earlier map, *The Streets of Ankh-Morpork*, was published, people asked me if this fossilization of the imagination will prevent future stories. Well, London and New York have been mapped for some time, and still seem attractive as locations for novelists. There will be more Discworld stories, I hope. The only difference is that now I'll have a map reference.
>
> This map possibly isn't the way things are. But it is one of the ways they could be. (Pratchett 1995, 2)

The key philosophy behind this particular design has already been illustrated in a quote above, but there is much more to discuss. Firstly, the map itself is beautifully detailed (see image 6 in the Annexes).

However interesting it might be to analyse every single detail present in the map, very possibly the most important detail is the little note "pinned" just beyond the edge, the note that states: "Based on the Discworld novels of Terry Pratchett. Devised by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs." That note is so important because it is precisely that, a side note, the main heading reading what can be seen in image 7 of the Annexes.

Where in *The Streets of Ankh-Morpork* it is stated that it had been devised by Pratchett and Briggs on the parchment scrolls on the sides, similar to the ones that describe it, the information in it is part of the map. On the Discworld map it is not. While it is true that the illustrator's own signature is an integral albeit discrete part of the map, as a whole it still shines through as something very much from the Discworld rather than from, for lack of a better expression, the real world. To add to that effect, where the city map simply had a straightforward key and grid for the viewer to find points of interest, the world map has an account of the key feats of five Discworld explorers. Even if these accounts, or some of them, are put in place to accommodate some apparent incongruences within the novels, such as the creation of an explorer that had a particular talent for sailing just beyond the point where the continents he was searching for would be within his line of sight and thus finding absolutely nothing, for the most part they present the Disc as something worth exploring. The creation of these flesh and bone explorers is an important step towards the main thing all these materials ultimately provide: as real a world as an imaginary one can be.

The next map to be released, in 1998, depicts an essential part of the Disc, but one that will not be a focus of this dissertation, the land of Lancre, and is called *A tourist guide to Lancre: a Discworld Mapp*, the already familiar second heading reading: "Including a Pyctorial Guide to the Lancre Fells and a description of a picture*f*que and charming walk in thys charming and hospitable country". The main aspects to emphasize about this map are the inclusion of the illustrator, this time Paul Kidby, as one of the parties responsible for the creation of the map, and the detailed experiences shared by familiar characters from the novels. Kidby's approach as an illustrator focuses on the landscape, where Player before him mostly just embellished the structures that had been devised by Pratchett and Briggs, creating maps that could have originated on the Discworld. Kidby, on the other hand, strives to show how those landscapes might actually be. Rather than a map he draws, in Pratchett and Brigg's words, "a witch's eye view". The accounts in turn are a major step beyond what had been done in the previous map, mainly because the point of view that is used is that of the characters themselves, one of which, "Nanny" Gytha Ogg, is extremely relevant in a number of novels, and therefore immediately recognizable by

many readers. Both these developments are further steps towards the construction of the Discworld as something more and more concrete.

The last map to mention, which was released in 1999, is *Death's Domain.* There is no mapping Death's Domain, not in the sense that elements from the novels have to be researched and cross-referenced to realize how they relate to one another, therefore the task to bring Death's home to life falls to Pratchett, of course, and, once again, to Kidby. Unlike the previous maps, this one does not provide further steps, or at least not great leaps, towards the concretization of the Discworld, not compared to *A Tourist Guide to Lancre*. What it does is depict something that is not actually on the Disc itself, but an alternate realm. The Discworld novels are not set exclusively on that Disc that Stephen Briggs so painstakingly mapped out, they explore other realms, and this is probably the one that is most relevant and whose true spirit is harder to capture even if it is quite thoroughly described in the novels. This is due to the fact that it exists in several different dimensions, and concepts like space and time are manufactured rather than existing naturally. One detail that is a step in the direction of the overall objective behind these materials is the fact that this map does not have introductions either by Pratchett or the illustrator himself. Rather, what precedes the key on this map is a simple description of the way the Realm works and something about its inhabitants, but none of it signed, which is fitting since no character who has visited, or lived in, Death's Domain would actually write something called "the tourist guide to Death's House" or similar.

As a whole these maps go a long way in understanding what the Discworld is like, they certainly help with the visualisation component of that understanding. The framing of these maps evolves and the last two toe the line between cartography and illustration. To further this concretization, then, the next step would be to actually have an illustrated Discworld story. There have been a number of Discworld novels adapted into graphic novels, namely *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*, but there is only one that has been designed as such, a story that has actually already been quoted in this dissertation: *The Last Hero: a Discworld Fable*, which was first published in 2001. The point of mentioning this book does not lie in its story line, even though that story, as many others that will not be analysed in this dissertation, is well worth a close look. The point

is to point out its existence. As has been demonstrated above, Terry Pratchett has had some fairly ambiguous feelings about what he has called "the fossilization of the imagination" (Pratchett and Briggs 1995, 2). Those words were about geography, but even if this graphic novel does not have a foreword of any kind it is not too outlandish to assume that similar misgivings would emerge when it came to the physical look of characters. What this particular graphic novel does, because it is not an adaptation but an original story by the creator of the Discworld, is, in a more or less definite way, state that that is the way the Discworld looks: Great A'Tuin, the elephants and the Disc, the Hub and Dunmanifestin, or Rincewind, Vetinari, Cohen the Barbarian, Death, Captain Carrot and so on. Surely plenty of readers will still imagine the characters as they had before, but with *The Last Hero* they will certainly have a visual reference for a great number of places and characters.

When it comes to the look of this magical world these are probably the most important works to take into consideration, at least when it comes to materials that provide something that could not simply be imagined by the reader, materials beyond straightforward illustration. Regarding that type of visualisation though, Paul Kidby has published a volume called *The Art of Discworld* which was drawn with the collaboration of the author. There is another collection of stories, however, that is worth a look as well if an effort to understand the increasingly real Discworld is being made: *The Science of Discworld.* The structure is different than the common Discworld novel. The books offer stories whose chapters are interspersed with scientific chapters. The story part focuses on the wizards of Unseen University, whose experiments with the fundamental unit of magic, the thaum, bear a striking resemblance with modern physics, and the scientific chapters propose to compare the Discworld with Roundworld, the Discworld name for the planet Earth. The overall premise is that of seeing Roundworld through a Discworld perspective, while effectively also seeing the Discworld from a Roundworld inspired scientific standpoint. There are four volumes: *The Science of Discworld*, *The Science of Discworld II: The Globe*, *The Science of Discworld III: Darwin's Watch* and *The Science of Discworld IV: Judgement Day*, all written by the same trio: Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen. Such a large collection poses yet again the conundrum that has plagued

this study from the very start, that of selecting what to use. While an awareness of the entire series is of course profitable, a close look at the initial spirit behind it will have to suffice for the purposes of this dissertation:

> Discworld runs on magic.
>
> Roundworld – our home planet, and by extension the universe in which it sits – runs on rules. In fact, it simply *runs*.
>
> (…)
>
> Is there a connection between magic and science? Can the magic of Discworld, with its eccentric wizards, down-to-Earth witches, obstinate troll, fire-breathing dragons, talking dogs, and personified Death, shed any useful light on hard, rational, solid, Earthly science?
>
> We think so. (Pratchett, Stewart and Cohen 2002, 9)

Furthermore, in the very same introduction-like chapter of the first of these science-oriented books, from which the words above come, upon comparing *The Science of Discworld* with other "Science of" books, the authors categorically state that they will not be using the same approach, which would be trying to find scientific explanations for what is told in the Discworld stories. And then go on to explain why not:

> We decided not to do these things, for a good reason… um, two reasons.
>
> The first is that it would be… er… dumb.
>
> And this because of the second reason. Discworld does not run on scientific lines. Why pretend that it might? Dragons don't breathe fire because they have asbestos lungs – they breathe fire because everyone knows that's what dragons *do*.
>
> What runs Discworld is deeper than mere magic and more powerful than pallid science. It is *narrative imperative*, the power of story. (…) In the Discworld universe, then, there is narrativium. It is part of the spin of every atom, the drift of every cloud. It is what causes them to be what they are and continue to exist and take part in the ongoing story of the world. (Pratchett, Stewart and Cohen 2002, 10)

And this will be the basis for this story about the accidental creation of Roundworld by the wizards of Unseen University, the discovery of what can be understood about a world that functions on rules, if seen from the point of view of the inhabitants of a world that functions due to this *narrative imperative.* One of the main purposes of fantasy, as was explored in the first part of this chapter, is to put the real world in a new light, and this series of books certainly is a shining example of that.

The last material that is going to be mentioned here is an Atlas, one that was published in 2015, a year that was very significant for the Discworld series. Not wholly dissimilarly to the other book published that year, *Raising Steam*, this volume is a compilation of the facts that make the Discworld the wonderfully whimsical and at times even terrifyingly grotesque, but above all, very real world that it is. The name of this Atlas is *The Compleat Discworld Atlas*, but much like the maps that were its forebears, which were admittedly comparatively pale, its cover provides quite a bit more information (see figure 8 in the Annexes).

The cover says it all, and the volume delivers its promise, covering every detail of the landscape and culture of the Disc from Hub to Rim. It even has a new map of the Discworld, which makes the first one look very much like something a street vendor such as C.M.O.T. Dibbler would peddle: it is two-sided, one side depicting a view from some point around the orbit of the moon or sun, and the other a professional looking map which includes extra demographic, geological, meteorological and even thaumic (the density of background magic) information (see figures 9 and 10 in the Annexes). Beyond the cover, the Atlas, including the map, is claimed to be the work of the Guild of Trespassers (since for the most part the lands that the so-called explorers of the Disc found were already inhabited, the guild was renamed), with the help of the Unseen University Press, the imaging "technology" used to produce most of the information being also a courtesy of the wizards. Much like the later Discworld maps, this structure helps the volume to feel to the reader that it came directly from Ankh-Morpork rather than just being about the Discworld. The contents themselves are as detailed as one could expect from a "Roundworld" Atlas. In a fairly egocentric fashion the first chapter is about Ankh-Morpork and the surrounding lands and only the second is about the Ramtops, which include the Hub, the mountain at the centre of the world at the top of which is the home of the Gods. The following chapters deal with every other region: islands, be they sunken or actually above the water, deserts, stormy mountains, mines, and much more. The message behind the existence of this Atlas is quite clear, if somewhat grim: that that is the Discworld, that it is complete. The risk of "fossilizing imagination" is really quite high after perusing this Atlas, but it is well worth it, because the true challenge afterwards

will be to curb the impulse to explain every single detail that makes Pratchett's world so perfect in all its magnificent quirkiness at the simplest question about Pratchett or the Discworld.

Chapter 2 – From "Anthropomorphic Personification" to (almost a) Person: Death's Journey of Self-Discovery

> 'All that business with his daughter,' said Albert. 'I mean… daughter? And then he heard bout apprentices. Nothing would do but he had to go and get one! Hah! Nothing but trouble, that was. And you, too come to think of it…you're one of his fancies (…)'
>
> [The Death of Rats nodded.]
>
> 'He always gets it wrong,' said Albert. 'That's the trouble. (Pratchett 1994, 22)

> Terry Pratchett may not have been the first writer to personify Death as a walking, talking skeleton tasked with reaping the souls of the living, but he was the first to give him a horse named Binky and a granddaughter named Susan. (Scott 2015)

"Life has only two certainties: taxes and death" is a common saying that proposes to euphemise the inevitability of death (while admittedly also maligning taxes), and if death is such an incontrovertible and immutable concept why should Death, its "Anthropomorphic Personification" in the Discworld universe, be any different? It probably would not if we were not discussing one of Sir Terry Pratchett's Discworld characters, but in that world, anything is possible, including personal growth on the part of an eternal, and supposedly unchanging, personification of an ultimately incomprehensible occurrence such as death.

If you strip away the fantasy, the imagination and the belief of something beyond, there is nothing more definite than death: death is the ultimate reality, as Death often points out throughout the Discworld novels. Out of hundreds of characters he had to choose from, be they mortals, gods or anthropomorphic personifications, it was Death and his family that Terry Pratchett continuously used to explore that unanswerable question of what it means to be human. This chapter will attempt to explore not only how Death himself tries to unveil the meaning of life, but also in what other ways the novels centred around him revolve around that concept as well.

Death appears in virtually every Discworld novel, a world filled with dragons, trolls and random magic is not short on deadly perils after all. In most of them his function is quite simple: he does his job, reaping the souls of the deceased, and as a side-effect becomes a literary mechanism to spare the reader the need to witness unnecessary

violence. In fact, as a rule, death is not narrated in the Discworld novels; generally, characters either turn up dead or some ominous event that will clearly lead to a death, usually a murder, is cut just before the deed is done. Death's first appearance pegs him as a bit insensitive to the life of common mortals, and even somewhat temperamental:

> Rincewind (…) jostled a tall dark figure, turned to deliver a few suitable curses, and beheld Death.
>
> It had to be Death. No-one else went around with empty eye sockets and, of course, the scythe over one shoulder was another clue. (…)
>
> Death, insofar as it was possible in a face with no movable features, looked surprised.
>
> RINCEWIND? Death said, in tones as deep and heavy as the slamming of leaden doors, far underground.
>
> 'Um,' said Rincewind, trying to back away from that eyeless stare.
>
> BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE? (Boom, boom went crypt lids, in the worm-haunted fastnesses under old mountains…)
>
> 'Um, why not?' said Rincewind. 'Anyway, I'm sure you've got lots to do, so if you'll just –'
>
> I WAS SURPRISED THAT YOU JOSTLED ME, RINCEWIND, FOR I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THEE THIS VERY NIGHT.
>
> 'Oh no, not –'
>
> OF COURSE, WHAT'S SO BLOODY VEXING ABOUT THE WHOLE BUISNESS IS THAT I WAS EXPECTING TO MEET THEE IN PSEUDOPOLIS.
>
> 'But that's five hundred miles away!'
>
> YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME, THE WHOLE SYSTEM'S GOT SCREWED UP AGAIN, I CAN SEE THAT. LOOK, THERE'S NO CHANCE OF YOU –'
>
> Rincewind backed away, hands spread protectively in front of him. The dried fish salesman on a nearby stall watched the madman with interest.
>
> 'Not a chance!'
>
> I COULD LEND YOU A VERY FAST HORSE.
>
> 'No!'
>
> IT WON'T HURT A BIT.
>
> 'No!' Rincewind turned and ran. Death watched him go, and shrugged bitterly.
>
> SOD YOU, THEN, Death said. He turned, and noticed the fish salesman. With a snarl Death reached out a bony finger and stopped the man's heart, but He didn't take much pride in it. (Pratchett 1983, 77-78)

For the rest of the first novel Death keeps on showing this somewhat vindictive facet, and for a while he hounds Rincewind, because he feels cheated, but by the end he seems to have made peace with the fact that Rincewind is not going to keep the appointment he has with him, at least not for a little while. In this very novel he is also a little more hands-on than what he will eventually state that the job requires, for example he helps the inn keeper at the Broken Drum start the fire that will kill him. As a whole the Death that shows up in *The Colour of Magic* is quite different from the one that the readers get to know after those stories, in fact his behaviour in the last chapter is already fairly distinct from that of the first two. This shift in personality is of course explained, or at least an explanation is hinted at, further on: "It's one of his fancies again" (Pratchett 1994, 22) is a simple comment made by his servant, which nevertheless effectively informs that occasionally Death just behaves unexpectedly. It is also appropriate to recall the time he decided to follow Commander Vimes around not to reap his soul but to provide him with more professional near-death experiences, of which that particular character tends to have a fair amount.

In the second Discworld novel, *The Light Fantastic*, a different side of Death is seen right away, perhaps because instead of seeing him on the job the reader is introduced to his household and sees him learning a card game with his friends. His friends might be the other three Horsemen of the Apocalypse, but they were playing cards. But the most important fact about to be introduced in this novel is the fact that he has adopted a daughter.

> What's your name? My name is Ysabell.'
>
> 'Um, Rincewind. Excuse me, but if this *is* the house of Death, what are you doing here? You don't look dead to me.'
>
> 'Oh, I live here.' She looked intently at him. 'I say, you haven't come to rescue your lost love, have you? That always annoys Daddy, he says it's a good job he never sleeps because if he did he'd be kept awake by the tramp, tramp, tramp of young heroes coming down here to carry back a lot of silly girls, he says.'
>
> 'Goes on a lot, does it?' said Rincewind weakly, as they walked along a black-hung corridor.
>
> 'All the time. I think it's very romantic. Only when you leave, it's very important not to look back.'

(…)

As he spoke [Rincewind] was aware that he may have missed something vital. He shut his eyes and tried to recall the last few minutes of conversation. Then it hit him like a sandbag.

'*Daddy*?'

She looked back demurely. 'Adopted, actually,' she said 'He found me when I was a little girl, he says. It was all rather sad.' (Pratchett 1986, 122-124)

Even though *The Light Fantastic* is not centred on Death it is the first novel to introduce a many of his defining personality traits. Some of these are stated: "Owing largely to inefficiency Rincewind had consistently failed to die at the right time, and if there is one thing that Death does not like it is unpunctuality." (Pratchett 1986, 124); "The Death of the Disc was a traditionalist who prided himself on his personal service and spent most of the time depressed because this was not appreciated, (…) He still used a scythe, he'd point out, while the Deaths of other worlds had long ago invested in combine harvests." (Pratchett 1986, 126) Whereas some are implied, such as his competitiveness and unwillingness to come across something beyond his comprehension: "RIGHT, he said, PESTILENCE, OPEN ANOTHER PACK OF CARDS, I'M GOING TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS IF IT KILLS ME, FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING OF COURSE", (Pratchett 1986, 127) or perhaps most important of all, his willingness to bend his own rules. After all, adopting a young girl is probably not something a Death should do. All of these traits will play major parts in the novels that centre on Death and his family, and they are all hinted at as early as the second Discworld novel, arguably the first that, while still being strongly parodical of fantasy as a genre, starts building the Discworld as a world.

The novels that will actually be analysed in this chapter, as well as the overlying arches between them, do focus on Death and his family, on him and his granddaughter Susan for the most part. As has been mentioned before, Death makes an appearance in a great number of Discworld novels, but those that are actually centred on him are: *Mort*, *Reaper Man*, *Soul Music*, *Hogfather* and *Thief of Time*. All of them have their merits, and all are well worth a close look, but as before a selection must be made. The first two novels of this arch, *Mort* and *Reaper Man*, are extremely important to understand how Death is Pratchett's chosen case study to muse on what it means to be human on an

individual level, so they will of course be central to this chapter. *Soul Music* and *Hogfather* see Death in a different role and key aspects of them will be mentioned, but the storylines themselves will not be dissected. Finally, *Thief of Time* deserves, for the purposes of this study, a similar treatment to the two novels that immediately precede it, but for different reasons. As it is the last novel to focus on these characters and on the running theme of understanding human individuality, the character development that occurs is particularly interesting to analyse, even if it is not Death's own development.

2.1. *Mort*

Before considering the plot of *Mort* one should first look at its concept: Death hires an apprentice. This concept is advertised before the reader even opens the book: "Death comes to us all. When he came to Mort, he offered him a job." Death's own daughter is who best describes the unlikeliness of such a need to arise. After stating that "apprentices become masters and you can't have more than one Death" she becomes rather angry with Mortimer, the title character and Death's apprentice, because he does not realize he is in a ridiculous situation:

> She exploded.
>
> 'Why are you here? Why did Father bring you here?'
>
> 'He hired me at the hiring fair,' said Mort. 'All the boys got hired. And me.'
>
> 'And you want to be hired?' she snapped. 'He's Death, you know. The Grim Reaper. He's very important. He's not something you *become*, he's something you *are.*'
>
> (Pratchett 1987, 45)

It may seem that Ysabell is stating the obvious in the quote above, but someone should, and in a book with little more than 300 pages, page 45 is not that early a point in it. Neither Death nor Mort act as if this apprenticeship is at all unlikely, apart from the moment when Mort wakes up in Death's house and spends some time adjusting to the fact that he is not in fact dreaming. This part of this chapter will attempt to answer Ysabell's angry questions: "Why are you here? Why did Father bring you here?". The novel itself, of course, sheds some light on Death's motives, but this study will endeavour to go a little beyond the stated information.

Let us first address the obvious. “Mort” is the French word for Death, so there is an immediate connection between the two characters, even before they meet. An important side-note about the Discworld that should be mentioned at this juncture is that, as in Roundworld, there are different languages on it, Morporkian would be the equivalent to English, generally speaking, and from a Morporkian point of view the language from Pseudopolis sounds remarkably like French. The point being that in Pseudopolis Death’s name is Mort, death is a concept after all, not a word, and Death is that concept regardless of the language in which it is expressed. A further illustration of this is present in *The Light Fantastic* when Death’s fellow Horsemen call him Mort, almost like a nickname. Death and Mortimer’s first exchange may be a reference to both or either of these facts:

> WHAT IS YOUR NAME? [said the skull]
>
> ‘Uh,’ said Mort. ‘Mortimer… Sir. They call me Mort.’
>
> WHAT A COINCIDENCE, said the skull (Pratchett 1987, 21)

Through the first pages of the novel one can gain some insight into the character of the characters, at least a version of them, a starting point one might say. Some of Death’s character had been previously hinted at through a rushed, detached and most importantly, scared point of view, that of Rincewind, but Mort’s own lack of fear of Death allows for a similar yet somewhat different assertion, a fuller and more personal one. By the same token, Mort’s own initial description is just as important: an inquisitive mind, the words his family use being “Not what you’d call stupid”; most poignant of all, a fair amount of awkwardness, the first description of his body being “he was tall, red-haired and freckled, with the sort of body that seems to be only marginally under its owner’s control; it appeared to have been built out of knees” (Pratchett 1987, 12); and perhaps the most important characteristic being rather downplayed, shining through only at key moments, his kindness. That kindness, among other key aspects about the relationship between the two, is perfectly illustrated in Mort’s first outing with his master, at which a closer look will be examined in due course.

Death’s own kind side, however, becomes apparent quite early on:

> [Death] appeared to be listening to something.
>
> THERE ARE TIMES, YOU KNOW, he said, half to himself, WHEN I GET REALLY UPSET.
>
> He turned on one heel and set off down an alleyway at high speed (…)

> Death stopped by a decrepit water butt and plunged his arm in at full length, bringing out a small sack with a brick tied to it. He drew his sword, a line of flickering blue fire in the darkness, and sliced through the string.
>
> I GET VERY ANGRY INDEED, he said. He upended the sack and Mort watched the pathetic scraps of sodden fur slide out, to lie in their spreading puddle on the cobbles. Death reached out with his white fingers and stroked them gently.
>
> After a while something like grey smoke curled up from the kittens and formed three small cat-shaped clouds in the air. (…)
>
> YOU DON'T SEE PEOPLE AT THEIR BEST IN THIS JOB (Pratchett 1987, 32)

The person who knows him best, his daughter, describes this kindness in a conversation with Mort: "'He's very kind,' said Ysabell (…), 'in a sort of absent-minded way.' (…) 'I won't hear a word against him. He tries to do his best. It's just that he's always got so much to think about.'" (Pratchett 1987, 144-145)

One essential piece of information still to consider before exploring the dynamic between Death and humans, namely his apprentice, is Death's opinion of humanity:

> TAKE THIS THINGS, NOW, said Death, fingering a passing canapé. I MEAN, MUSHROOMS YES, CHICKEN YES, CREAM YES, I'VE NOTHING AGAINST ANY OF THEM, BUT WHY IN THE NAME OF SANITY MINCE THEM ALL UP AND PUT THEM IN LITTLE PASTRY CASES?
>
> 'Pardon?' said Mort.
>
> THAT'S MORTALS FOR YOU, Death continued. THEY'VE ONLY GOT A FEW YEARS IN THIS WORLD AND THEY SPEND THEM ALL IN MAKING THINGS COMPLICATED FOR THEMSELVES. FASCINATING. (Pratchett 1987, 57)

The following quote is the end of an extremely important scene in the novel, and one that should be considered in full which can be found between pages 55 and 65. It is the only narrated outing in which Death takes Mort with him, which allows for the introduction of key aspects of their relationship and of the job itself. Some are essential to the issue at hand, such as the way Death sees his job, and how he teaches Mort, and some are important to understand the nature of being Death, such as the differences between reality and perception. The very last lines of the episode are perhaps the ones that illustrate best the key points that are made:

> YOU TRIED TO WARN HIM, [Death] said (…).
>
> 'Yes, sir. Sorry. (…) Are you going to send me home?' [Mort] said.
>
> Death reached down and swung him up behind the saddle.

BECAUSE YOU SHOWED COMPASSION? NO. I MIGHT HAVE DONE IF YOU HAD SHOWN PLEASURE. BUT YOU MUST LEARN THE COMPASSION PROPER TO YOUR TRADE.

'What's that?'

A *SHARP* EDGE. (Pratchett 1987, 65)

The episode in question shows plenty about both characters, that the Grim Reaper is not so grim after all for one thing or that Mort, who just happens to be the youngest son in his family, has quite the need for recognition, or at the very least he would very much appreciate it if people called him by his name. It even shows that both Death and Mort share an admiration for princess Keli, even if for vastly different reasons (Mort's originating in hormone-induced adolescent yearnings and Death's on a rational appreciation for strength of character). And finally, it reveals that Death's abilities are precisely not magic, and hints that Mort's understanding of them is essential. All in all, this is the scene that defines the pupil/master relationship between the two.

The main point of this chapter is to analyse Death's behaviour, and shifts thereof, but a story about Death's decision to take on an apprentice cannot merely focus on him. The greater part of the novel actually centres on the boy, Mort. Being Death's apprentice, from the outset, before there is any room for character development, will mean two things, that the boy, Mort, will have to learn THE DUTY, Death's craft and job, but perhaps more importantly that he is an apprentice. And an apprentice is, almost by definition, particularly in a world that functions on narrative imperative, someone young who is put under the care of a stranger and who, upon learning a little bit about his new career, will think he knows a lot about it while in reality knowing next to nothing. This is a recipe for both disaster and comedy. Mort's antics, however, while fun to observe, contribute little to the study of Death's journey of self-discovery. The motives for those antics are in any case very significant, and the shift in his bearing is absolutely essential, so those are the parts of Mort's own evolution that will be considered relevant. As such, Mort's big mistake, arguably the most important driving force of the plot, is not particularly important to analyse to make the desired point. As most great literature, this novel is about several things, not only about a "being" that is so much beyond humanity that he can hardly hope to truly understand it and his relationship with the human that will accidently

point him in a right direction to attempt precisely that. It is also about young, fickle, and in most cases ultimately inconsequential love. A great part of the narrative focuses on Mort's infatuation with Princess, eventually Queen, Keli of Sto Lat, which led to his saving her instead of reaping her soul when she was supposed to die, the aforementioned big mistake, and the chaos that ensues. In spite of this, eventually Mort and Ysabell realize they belong together and he becomes a Duke, the Duke of Sto Helit, courtesy of Queen Keli, and in a fairy-tale-esque twist everything turns out all right for the couple, for the time being. Little about that portion of the storyline is pertinent for the study that is being made here, but for a few key moments. And they are so because they make characters change. Not that many characters do change: Albert, Death's manservant, for one not only doesn't change, but hasn't changed for literally hundreds of years; similarly, Ysabell doesn't actually change either, she just reveals more about herself as the plot progresses. Cutwell, the wizard, and Keli herself, on the other hand, may be accused of personal growth, but not enough to warrant a chapter in a dissertation such as this. The changes that concern it are those of Death and the boy, Mort, but most importantly how they relate to one another.

The best place to start when seeing how Death and Mort affect each other is the moment they meet. Death's impressive figure arrives at the employment fair, riding his impressive steed and gangly Mort is standing there, dejected, wearing a thoroughly unimpressive garment, stubbornly determined to see the fair through. And then:

> The impressive effect was rather spoilt by a patch of ice.
>
> OH, BUGGER.
>
> It wasn't exactly a voice. The words were there all right, but they arrived in Mort's head without bothering to pass through his ears.
>
> He rushed forward to help the fallen figure, and found himself grabbing hold of a hand that was nothing more than polished bone, smooth and rather yellowed like an old billiard ball. The figure's hood fell back, and a naked skull turned its empty eyesockets towards him.
>
> Not quite empty, though. Deep within them, as though they were windows looking across the gulfs of space, were two tiny blue stars.
>
> It occurred to Mort that he ought to feel horrified, so he was slightly shocked to find that he wasn't. It was a skeleton sitting in front of him, rubbing his knees and

grumbling, but it was a live one, curiously impressive, but not, for some strange reason, very frightening.

THANK YOU, BOY (Pratchett 1987, 21)

This scene is funny, yes, but the question is if that is all it is. Perhaps it is comedy just for the sake of itself, but it could also be a foreshadowing of role-reversal. Both options are within the scope of Pratchett's style for sure. The Anthropogenic Personification of the ultimate reality is not likely to just slip and fall, unless he wanted to make himself less frightening, a result he does get. Then again, Death slipping on a patch of ice might just have been too funny an image not to write. When it comes to Pratchett overthinking the author's intentions is quite often equivalent to heading in the wrong direction.

Other parallels are not so ambiguous. The scene where Death first decides to send Mort out on his own is a great example. First Albert seems to think that his master has "been overdoing it", which since his job is what he actually is should not be possible, and then, when confronted with Princess Keli's hourglass Death asks the following question:

WHAT IS THAT SENSE INSIDE YOUR HEAD OF WISTFUL REGRET THAT THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY APPARENTLY ARE?

'Sadness, master. I think. Now –'

I AM SADNESS (Pratchett 1987, 77)

Even if Death cannot feel in the traditional sense, this certainly looks like he is treading those waters in the moment described above, and because of the girls with whom Mort is infatuated. The key aspect to point out here, however, has to do with Mort's own adventure at the same moment. Before the scene quoted above he is walking along in a shady, pun intended, part of Ankh-Morpork, having asked for an afternoon off, a foreign concept to Death until he was asked, and he was accosted by three thieves with murderous intent, and he walks through a wall, by himself and by accident. After the scene quoted above he finds himself inside a Klatchian household, and when confronted he not only understands what the family is saying, which is being said in Klatchian, a language he never learned, but that he can answer back in that same language. The information to take from these three scenes is that while Mort is starting to use Death's abilities on his own, even if unwittingly, Death is starting to feel, or at least to think feelings. The conclusions will come after a closer look is taken at more scenes where this shift is observable.

When he first sends Mort out on his own, he actually uses the word "feel": I DON'T FEEL QUITE RIGHT (Pratchett 1987, 89), and that small detail is just the beginning. As Mort struggles with THE DUTY, and his obsession with saving Princess Keli, Death goes out, takes time off, it being quite likely that he got that idea from Mort. When Mort comes back from his first, and History-shattering, outing Death is making flies, preparing for a fishing trip, and simply takes his apprentice's word on how well his outing went. He then actually does go fishing, slightly too efficiently; he attends a party at the Patrician's palace, where while dancing something called the Serpent Dance, but which seems to bear a close resemblance to the Roundworld conga line, is told about "fun" and strives to understand it; he bullies some lowlifes, who in all fairness did threaten him first, into explaining him the point of gambling; and he even, after considerable effort, manages to get drunk, which propels him to just stand on a dock enjoying the view and realizing he is "glad to be alive, and very reluctant to be Death; that in turn leads him to some sort of employment agency, where he experiences embarrassment for failing to walk through a wall; then he gets a job in the lowest possible branch of the culinary business, where he experiences happiness and talks with a voice.

Meanwhile Mort is becoming Death. Cutwell describes his ability to unknowingly, and eventually knowingly, walk through walls quite accurately:

> 'He's becoming real'
>
> 'But we're all real! At least, you are, and I suppose I am.' [said Keli.]
>
> 'But he's becoming more real. Extremely real. Nearly as real as Death and you don't get much realler. Not much realler at al.' (Pratchett 1987, 237)

He starts talking in Death's lack of voice, or VOICE, and his eyes lose their brown human colour to become flaring blue points, and if truth be told the power goes to his head, Albert's biography describes this shift in behaviour in a fairly definite manner:

> "for he saw not just Death but Death with all the human seasonings of vengeance and cruelty and distaste, and with terrible certainty he knew that this was the last chance and Mort would send him back into time and hunt him down and take him bodily into the dark Dungeon Dimensions where creatures of horror would dot dot dot dot dot" (Pratchett 1987, 245)

Mort in turn describes his situation differently, if quite as accurately: "DEATH IS WHOEVER DOES DEATH'S JOB" (Pratchett 1987, 268). As a consequence of his

threat to Albert[4], Mort causes him to go back to the Disc and force the eight senior wizards of Unseen University to summon Death. What this in fact does is make Death whole, it rips what of Death was in Mort and returns it to Death.

All might just return to normal in due time, were it not for the fact that Mort, and one is led to assume Death as well, remember what it was like to be Death/human. In their final encounter, Death certainly seems to show some residual emotions. Emotions like anger, which causes him to give Mort a rather lasting scar, and even regret, and mirth or glee. Of this two it is not easy to tell which, all that is certain is that he laughs. And then in a compassionate gesture that has nothing to do with sharp edges he gives Mort another chance. He even makes an appearance at his wedding with Ysabell.

The role-reversal helps both Death and Mort gain an appreciation for what it is like to be the other: Mort learns what it is like to be responsible for the very fabric of reality, and Death fails to understand the point of a conga line and gets drunk, meaning he understands a bit more about what it means to be human. If Death had wanted this experience, if he had wanted a day, or several days, off, the angry question posed by Ysabell when she meets Mort, the one the first part of this chapter proposes to answer, would be answered. But before he met Mort and his humanity started to influence him, before he let a little of his "deathness" seep into his apprentice by teaching him THE DUTY, it is not likely he would feel the need for a day off. Death's true motive for hiring an apprentice, the actual answer to Ysabell's question, is slightly less obvious, less advertised, and makes Death's final decision of giving Mort a second chance make more sense. There are quite a few clues for what this reason might be. The problem with Death, particularly before he takes on an apprentice, is that what he knows about humanity is gained from observation, not experience, extensive observation. He knows how people behave without actually understanding them, how things look but not their purpose. The description of his towel rail, present in *Soul Music*, might be one of the best examples of this:

[4] Albert, Death's servant, just happens to be Alberto Malich, the founder of Unseen University, and quite possibly the most powerful wizard of the last two thousand years. Legend has it he performed the Rite of AshkEnte backwards, a ritual that performed correctly summons and binds Death. The missing part of the story must be inferred, but the result was that Death and Albert have an arrangement, and as of *Mort* Albert still has ninety-one days, three hours and five minutes on the Disc.

> Almost everything (…) had been designed by the person who hadn't understood deskishness, and now hadn't understood ablutionology either.
>
> They had created a towel rail an entire athletics team could have used for training. The black towels on it were fused to it and were quite hard. (Pratchett 1994, 79)

Lezek, Mort's father, knows that "it's not unknown for an apprentice to inherit his master's business" and more importantly that "many a keen young man owes his advancement to his nuptials" (Pratchett 1987, 26). Death would, of course, be aware of this practice among humans and he has a daughter, even if not even she understands all that well why that is:

> 'My parents were killed crossing the Great Nef years ago. There was a storm, I think. He found me and brought me here. I don't know why he did it.'
>
> 'Perhaps he felt sorry for you?'
>
> 'He never feels anything. I don't mean that nastily, you understand. It's just that he's got nothing to feel with, no whatd'youcallits, no glands. He probably *thought* sorry for me.' (Pratchett 1987, 144)

And he wants her to be happy, which she is not, as becomes clear at a later point in the conversation between Mort and Ysabell from where the quote above originates, as well as the reason for her misery: she has been sixteen for decades, trapped in a manufactured world. The scene in question can be found in pages 146 and 147 and is quite worth reading if the objective is to understand Ysabell and her relationship with Mort. Death is hardly subtle when suggesting Mort and Ysabell should spend more time together, and he certainly seems to think that they are drawn to each other:

> NOW, YOU TWO CAN RUN ALONG. GET ALBERT TO DO YOU A PICNIC LUNCH OR SOMETHING. GET SOME FRESH AIR. I'VE NOTICED THE WAY YOU TWO ALWAYS AVOID EACH OTHER. He gave Mort a conspiratorial nudge – it was like being poked with a stick – and added, ALBERT'S TOLD ME WHAT THAT MEANS. (Pratchett 1987, 140)

This perception by itself may not directly translate into Death's interest in taking on an apprentice lying in a wish to find his daughter a husband, but on Mort's very first meeting with him after arriving at his Domain he does behave a lot as some sort of Lord whose heir is a daughter in marrying age:

> HAVE YOU MET MY DAUGHTER? He said.
>
> 'Er. Yes sir,' said Mort, his hand on the doorknob.

> SHE IS A VERY PLEASANT GIRL, said Death, BUT I THINK SHE QUITE LIKES HAVING SOMEONE OF HER OWN AGE TO TALK TO.
>
> 'Sir?'
>
> AND, OF COURSE, ONE DAY ALL THIS WILL BELONG TO HER.
>
> Something like a small blue supernova flared for a moment in the depths of his eyesockets. It dawned on Mort that, with some embarrassment and complete lack of expertise, Death was trying to wink. (Pratchett 1987, 49)

It goes without saying that death is eternal, which means Death is as well, or as eternal as the Disc itself, he will even reap Great A'Tuin, so what the "this" that will be Ysabell's some day is exactly is a bit of a mystery. In fact, a perfectly valid way to look at it, even if excessively cold and calculating, is that he did want a permanent vacation, and is looking for someone to take on the job, and that the daughter is yet another part of his master-plan to convince a suitable substitute, for no young man would refuse lands, a wife and immortality. But Death is death, he does not tire of, or stops, being what he is, he just finds humanity interesting and has taken an interest in it. He has rescued a girl that would have nothing due to her parents' death, adopted her into his inhuman home, and that daughter is unhappy, and as has been mentioned before, an inheritance is something someone with a general grasp of human behaviour would use to coax a young man. Ysabell in fact seems to guess a lot of this, which is not surprising, since she knows him as well as a person could. She comments that since it does not make sense for Death to need an apprentice he must have brought Mort into the household to marry her, she even notices that Mort has had an effect on her father. But there was one thing she may not truly understand about her father, she says: "He just likes to act like a human being. He's trying really hard at the moment;" (Pratchett 1987, 143) the thing is, it is very possible that he does not in fact like to act human, he just does it for her benefit. She was even the only one who was able to stand up to him when he decided to kill Mort (Pratchett 1087, 307). The final decision there might have had something to do with the fact that he and Mort ended up understanding each other in ways that no one else could, but his concern with Ysabell's well-being is something that is present throughout the novel. This is Death's first step into understanding humanity and it is one he takes by himself. Unlike the several experiences he has while sharing Mort's humanity, caring for his daughter's

well-being was something he discovered by himself. This caring may be thought rather than felt, but it true nonetheless.

The last episode of the book, which functions as a sort of epilogue, set after the service of Mort and Ysabell's wedding, shows what Death, according to himself, learned with the events of the novel. He states that he has decided not to take an interest in human affairs because it was clouding his judgement. When confronted with the possibility of being invited to a child's christening he also states that he was not "CUT OUT TO BE A FATHER, AND CERTAINLY NOT A GRANDAD" (Pratchett 1987, 315), it seems he does not have the right kind of knees. His actions seem to tell a different story, firstly he not only shows up at his own daughter's wedding bearing gifts, he recounts how he spoke with the Gods on their behalf, and above all he does not seem able to bring himself to actually speak to his daughter, asking Mort to give "[HIS] REGARDS TO YOUR GOOD LADY" (Pratchett 1987, 315) instead of doing that himself. Death experienced Mort's own humanity, and has developed a cordial relationship with him which is not dissimilar to mutual respect. Yet after deciding not to take an interest in human affairs he is still quite happy to converse with him. To Death's perfectly rational mind the shift probably made sense. Death is who does Death's job after all and Mort was doing the job. Side-effects made sense. His caring for Ysabell, however, is a different story: that human trait he developed before getting an apprentice to do his job. She is his true link to his "human" side, and having rationally decided not to take an interest in humans it stands to reason that he should not have any contact with her. Avoiding seeing his daughter is very possibly the most human thing Death does, even if the decision to do it is based on logic.

2.2. *Reaper Man*

Most novels centred on Death are about life in various ways. *Reaper Man*, however, is very much about death and mortality, the reason being that Death himself is confronted with it, being given a lifetimer of his own. While in *Mort* he had experienced human feelings and yearnings, here he finally learns what it would be like to not be eternal without stopping being himself: he does not change, he just stops doing his job. That leads

to a parallel story, set in Ankh-Morpork, that shows what happens when people die but are not properly reaped, when their life-force remains on the disc. Interesting as that plotline is, it does not advance the point of this chapter and since, for almost the entire novel, it actually does not connect with the plotline that centres on Death's alter ego, Bill Door, it will not be analysed here.

The first thing to look at is, of course, why the decision to give time to Death was made and who made it:

> Three grey figures floated (…). Exactly what they were can't be described in normal language. (…) They might be numbered among those who see to it that gravity operates and that time stays separate from space. Call them auditors. Auditors of reality.
>
> They were in conversation without speaking. They didn't need to speak. They just changed realty so that they had spoken.
>
> One said, It has never happened before. Can it be done?
>
> One said, It will have to be done. There is a *personality*. Personalities come to an end. Only forces endure.
>
> It said this with a certain satisfaction.
>
> One said, Besides… there have been irregularities. Well-known fact.
>
> One said, He has worked inefficiently?
>
> One said, No. We can't get him there.
>
> One said, That is the point. The word is *him*. Becoming a personality *is* inefficient. We don't want it to spread. (Pratchett 1991, 6)

This is when the Auditors of Reality are introduced to the Discworld novels. These are not creatures or beings, they are blandness with a shape. And they like order, their very reason for existence is to have order, and where there is life there is chaos, for them "To become a personality is to end" (Pratchett 1991, 7). So, they certainly would not approve of a world such as the Discworld, where belief and magic hold things together, life could hardly be more chaotic than in such a world. Furthermore, it is not orderly for a Death to have an opinion on life, it is not orderly for a Death to have an opinion on anything, to think, to have a personality. There is no greater crime than a difference of opinion for the Auditors, which is why the Disc's Death is their first target: he meddled, he got close to humans, formed an opinion.

The moment in which the Auditors break the news to Death is also well worth examining:

This is the room where the future pours into the past via the pinch of the now.

Timers line the walls. Not hour-glasses, although they have the same shape. (…)

It's not even sand in there. It's seconds, endlessly turning the *maybe* into the *was.*

And every lifetimer has a name on it.

(…)

[A] dark shape moves patiently along the rows.

And stops.

And hesitates.

Because there is a small gold timer, not much bigger than a watch.

It wasn't there yesterday,

(…).

It's got a name on it, in small capital letters.

The name is *DEATH.*

Death put down the timer, and then picked it up again. The sands of time were already pouring through. (…)

It meant that, even if tomorrows could exist here, there wouldn't be any. Not anymore.

(…)

Death turned slowly, and addressed the figure that wavered indistinctly in the gloom.

WHY?

It told him.

BUT THAT IS… NOT RIGHT.

It told him that No, it was right.

(…)

I HAVE ALWAYS DONE MY DUTY AS I SAW FIT.

The figure floated closer. It looked vaguely like a grey-robed and hooded monk.

It told him, We know. That is why we're letting you keep the horse. (Pratchett 1991, 7-9)

Death's initial reaction is that of shock, and indeed some feeling of injustice perhaps, a curious feeling for him to have since he has always maintained the there was no justice, only him. This initial reaction does seem to be somewhat human, at least not completely dissimilar to how a human would react to a death sentence. But an essential point to stress here does not pertain to that, but to the reaction the Auditors have to Death's

claim to a duty well performed: they agree. Unfortunately, he has just become too human, there is no animosity, or affection for that matter, not even respect, just cold logic.

Even if Death's first reaction is not positive, when he recounts the decision that has been made to Albert, he does not seem displeased at all, the full scene is a wonderful example of the dynamic between Albert and Death and it can be found between pages 16 and 18, but the key aspects are illustrated well enough in the following quote:

> Albert peered at the thing in Death's hand.
>
> 'But… the sand, sir. It's *pouring.*'
>
> QUITE SO.
>
> 'But that means… I mean…?'
>
> IT MEANS THAT ONE DAY THE SAND WILL ALL BE POURED, ALBERT.
>
> (…)
>
> 'But you're *Death*, master (…) you can't die, because you're Death, you'd have to happen to yourself (…)'
>
> NEVERTHELESS, I AM GOING TO DIE. THERE IS NO APPEAL.
>
> 'But what will happen to *me*?' Albert said. Terror glittered on his words like flakes of metal on the edge of a knife.
>
> (…)
>
> 'But you don't seem worried! You're really going to *die*?'
>
> YES. IT WILL BE A GREAT ADVENTURE.
>
> 'It will? You're not afraid?'
>
> I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE AFRAID.
>
> 'I could show you, if you like,' Albert ventured.
>
> NO. I SHOULD LIKE TO LEARN BY MYSELF. I SHALL HAVE EXPERIENCES. AT LAST.'
>
> 'Master… if you go, will there be –?'
>
> A NEW DEATH WILL ARISE FROM THE MINDS OF THE LIVING, ALBERT.
>
> (…)
>
> 'Oh. You'll see him, then?'
>
> OH, *YES.* AND I MUST LEAVE NOW.
>
> 'What, so soon?'
>
> CERTAINLY. MUSTN'T WASTE TIME! Death adjusted the saddle, and then turned and held the tiny hour-glass proudly in front of Albert's hooked nose.
>
> SEE! I HAVE TIME. AT LAST, I HAVE *TIME*!

Albert backed away nervously.

'And now that you have it, what are you going to do with it?' he said.

Death mounted his horse.

I AM GOING TO *SPEND* IT. (Pratchett 1991, 16-18)

Albert is panicking and Death is riding off into a new adventure, that is a fair summation of the scene above. Albert's panic is the proper human response, the memory of Death's last substitute probably being still quite fresh in his memory, and it could be worse, had he known that Death's forced retirement was partly due to having taken him on as a servant. Death on the other hand is going on his first adventure, his first experiences, the ones narrated in *Mort* having been courtesy of Mort's humanity. By contrast, this golden timer and the time it holds are his and only his.

Death finds a job at a harvest, he finds a place in a community, he makes a friend, he finds a new companion. Under the name Bill Door, he truly experiences what it is like to belong in the human world. And much more than when he was actually experiencing human feelings. Some of Bill Door's adventures are similar enough to the ones narrated in *Mort*, the key difference being that in this novel they are not set in a city, nor spread out in random places, they take place in a close-knit community. Some moments, however, are key to understanding how Bill grows, the main point of that even happening being that to grow one needs to have an end, somewhere down the line.

First, a look at Death's new home:

> Picture a cool, dark room, glimpsed through the open doorway. This isn't a room that people live in a lot. It's a room for people who live outdoors but have to come inside sometimes, when it gets dark. It's a room for harnesses and dogs, a room where oilskins are hung up to dry. There's a beer barrel by the door. There are flagstones on the floor and, along the ceiling beams, hooks for bacon. There's a scrubbed table that thirty hungry men could sit down at.
>
> There are no men. There are no dogs. There is no beer. There is no bacon. (Pratchett 1991, 62)

Miss Renata Flitworth's house is missing something. She is a tough, independent woman, a lonely woman. Death is by definition lonely. It is immaterial whether he knows that the household he is about to enter has that emptiness; he sees a "Man wanted" sign, he sees that someone needs help, that here is a place that needs occupying. An important

detail about the moment in which he is hired is that a name is demanded of him, and with the help of Miss Flitworth, the now mortal Anthropomorphic Personification of Death becomes Bill Door. Bill Door is not Death because, as it was established in *Mort*, Death is who does Death's job. Bill, however, has most of Death's inherent abilities, and certainly has his memories, personality and philosophy, it just does not have his duties, he is free. Free to sleep, free to dream, free to work, free to play and become the most skilful loser the small community has ever seen for the sake of popularity, free to drink, to wear overalls and a straw hat. Free to become Good Old Bill Door. Free to enjoy the small things life has to offer:

> He wondered if he'd ever felt wind and sunlight before. Yes, he'd felt them, he must have done. But he'd never *experienced* them like this; the way wind pushed at you, the way the sun made you hot. The way you could feel Time passing.
>
> Carrying you with it. (Pratchett 1991, 120)

First there was the freedom of being alive, that is what having limited time, a designated time to die, is: to live. After that joyous realisation, comes the realisation that after life comes death, and if one thinks about the finish line, the time is not so wonderful:

> DO YOU MIND IF I STOP THE CLOCK?
>
> She glanced up at the boggle-eyed owl.
>
> 'What? Oh. Why?'
>
> I AM AFRAID IT GETS ON MY NERVES.
>
> 'It's not very loud, is it?'
>
> Bill Door wanted to say that every tick was like the hammering of iron clubs on bronze pillars.
>
> IT'S JUST RATHER ANNOYING, MISS FLITWORTH. (Pratchett 1991, 125)

Time starts to feel constricting, yes, but death itself is not what Bill fears most, it is oblivion:

> 'What's worrying you, Bill?'
>
> I SUDDENLY KNOW WE ARE GOING TO DIE.
>
> She watched him thoughtfully.
>
> 'Well, so does everyone,' she said. 'And that's what you've been dreaming about, is it? Everyone feels like this some-times. I wouldn't worry about it, if I was you. The best thing to do is keep busy and act cheerful, I always say.'
>
> BUT WE WILL COME TO AN END!
>
> 'Oh, I don't know about that,' said Miss Flitworth. 'It all depends on what kind of life you've led, I suppose.'

(…)

YOU MEAN THAT WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU WHEN YOU DIE IS WHAT YOU *BELIEVE* WILL HAPPEN?

'It would be nice if that was the case, wouldn't it?' she said brightly.

BUT, YOU SEE, I KNOW WHAT *I* BELIEVE. I BELIEVE… NOTHING. (Pratchett 1991, 129)

This explains why Bill would fear dying just a little bit more than the average person. He also learns about sacrifice, saving a little girl from a burning house, even while knowing that doing so could upset the scales of History and the balance of the Universe (those were Death's concerns after all). And he saves her by sharing his own Time with her, since hers had run out, while being perfectly aware that when his own runs out what lies beyond is oblivion. For a short while Bill is at peace with dying, but he knows that the new Death will not care, that it will reap the little girl. And, as most humans would, he decides to fight for what he cares for, with the added advantage of having Death's knowledge. But still, when asked if he has any last words his answer is: "YES. I DON'T WANT TO GO." (Pratchett 1991, 211). Running off to meet Death would be daunting to anyone, even the previous one. What ensues is the typical epic battle, Bill does not approve of the New Death anyway, it wears a crown, and he feels Death should not want to rule, and besides it relies too much on "Drama". Throughout the narration his reasons are largely presented as noble, but one has to wonder if some self-preservation is not part of the equation, which is a very human attitude to have as well. In fact, when a critical part of his plan fails and Bill finds himself running away from the New Death he thinks: "It was, as he was wonderfully well placed to know, merely putting off the inevitable. But wasn't that what living was all about?" (Pratchett 1991, 228). Running from danger is probably the most basic survival instinct and the knowledge that it very probably is a useless one at that point does not stop him.

Even with this evolving emotional process, some habits die hard, and throughout his stay with Miss Flitworth Bill Door does often sound a lot like the Anthropomorphic Personification of Death, and the major metaphor for that is the harvest and the reaper man. The first of these instances emerges when his landlady first sees him at work, Bill Door is obviously quite efficient, but his technique is rather peculiar to Miss Flitworth:

It was the most interesting technique she had ever witnessed. (…)

> Eventually she said: 'It's good. You've got the swing and everything.'
> THANK YOU, MISS FLITWORTH.
> 'But why one blade of grass at a time?'
> Bill Door regarded the neat row of stalks for some while.
> THERE IS ANOTHER WAY?
> 'You can do lots in one go, you know.'
> NO. NO. ONE BLADE AT A TIME. ONE TIME, ONE BLADE.
> 'You won't cut many *that* way,' said Miss Flitworth.
> EVERY LAST ONE, MISS FLITWORTH. (Pratchett 1991, 91)

As he starts to feel part of the community he muses on this metaphor more consciously:

> Bill Door had never paid a great deal of attention to the names and faces of people, beyond that necessary for business. (…) to the eye of one stalk another stalk might be quite an impressive stalk, with dozens of amusing and distinctive little mannerisms that set it apart from all other stalks. But to the reaper man, all stalks start off as… just stalks. (Pratchett 1991, 167)

Probably the most telling, not so rational feeling, Bill has regarding the harvest is his hatred for what its inventor, Ned Simnel calls the Combination Harvest (Ned Simnel, one can fairly safely deduce, is the father of Dick Simnel, the inventor of the steam engine and a major character in *Raising Steam*). This immediate suspicion of something that will unthinkingly reap stalks in bulk might take the reader back to something that was mentioned, and already quoted in this dissertation, about Bill Door's earlier iteration in *The Light Fantastic*: "The Death of the Disc was a traditionalist who prided himself on his personal service and spent most of the time depressed because this was not appreciated, (…) He still used a scythe, he'd point out, while the Deaths of other worlds had long ago invested in combine harvests" (Pratchett 1986, 126). This hatred, the lesson he learns about the carelessness of the reaper man and his notion about each blade all deserving their own individual turn all culminate in his final appeal to Azrael, the Death of the Universe, Lord of Deaths everywhere: "LORD, WHAT CAN THE HARVEST HOPE FOR, IF NOT FOR THE CARE OF THE REAPER MAN?" (Pratchett 1991, 264). After Bill Door's time runs out and he dies, this becomes the nature of Death's sense of duty towards the living beings of the Discworld.

There are other key points that are present in this novel that actually bear more significance to the overall arch than to the plot of *Reaper Man*, but which should be mentioned nevertheless. Firstly, to understand the thought-process of the Auditors, one should look at what their envoy says, or does not actually say since they do not speak in the usual sense, when he takes Death/Bill Door's place when the wizards perform the Rite that summons Death:

> [Archchancellor Ridcully] was told, We bring good news.
>
> 'Good news? Good news?' Ridcully squirmed under the gazerless gaze. 'Oh, *good*. That *is* good news.'
>
> He was told, Death has retired.
>
> 'Pardon?'
>
> He was told, Death has retired.
>
> 'Oh? That is… news…' (Pratchett 1991, 102)

The main point to take away from this conversation is that Auditors lie. They have an agenda and they are not above using increasingly Machiavellian means to bring it about.

Another important detail learned in this novel is how an Anthropomorphic Personification comes into being, in this case Death himself.

> Belief creates (…) things.
>
> It created Death. Not death, which is merely a technical term for a state caused by a prolonged absence of life, but Death, the personality. He evolved, as it were, along with life. As soon as a living thing was even dimly aware of suddenly becoming a non-living thing, there was Death. He was Death long before humans ever considered him; they only added the shape and all the scythe and robe business to a personality that was already millions of years old. (Pratchett 1991, 104)

A little further along the novel this process is actually described for a number of specific Deaths, meaning Deaths of particular species. One of them will become a rather important part of Death's household, one who, the reader is led to believe, just happens to materialize for the first time quite close to Bill Door: the Death of Rats, who is a rat skeleton who wears a black robe and carries a tiny scythe.

By this point both Bill Door's life and other key aspects of the novel as regards the bigger picture have been sufficiently scrutinized for the purpose of understanding how Death as a character changes, grows and mirrors humanity. There is, however, another

key point to this chapter, which is to understand how these novels centred on this character also centre on the concept of humanity, particularly on an individual level. As such the following is a particularly interesting exchange to mention, and it is one that shows Bill Door's thoughts on humanity and mortality, one that actually does not relate to the novel-wide metaphor of the harvest:

> 'It must be very odd, knowing… the kind of things you know…'
>
> DO NOT ASK ME.
>
> 'That's not fair, you know. If we knew when we were going to die, people would live better lives.'
>
> IF PEOPLE KNEW WHEN THEY WERE GOING TO DIE, I THINK THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T LIVE AT ALL.
>
> '(…) And what do you know about it, Bill Door?'
>
> EVERYTHING (Pratchett 1991, 210)

After experiencing the dread of mortality and being Death, Bill Door feels he has truly learned all there is to know about dying, and he has a point. Even after he regains his job Death does not remain unchanged, or claim to have remained unchanged, as he had by the end of the events narrated in *Mort.* He takes Miss Flitworth dancing when he reaps her, showing her an unprecedented kindness and friendship. And perhaps more relevant for the rest of the arch, he shows some sentimentality for a particularly resilient and stubborn part of himself, the Death of Rats, whom he allows independent existence.

2.3. *Soul Music, Hogfather, Thief of Time*

As has been stated, aside from understanding how the character of Death, a being that represents an unchanging and unavoidable reality, experiences change and personal growth, this chapter intends to shed some light on how his, and his family's, perspective prove to be useful when dealing with that very concept. A key aspect of that further analysis is how Death takes on the title of Granddad, and how he becomes a sort of protector for life on the Disc from the Auditors of reality. Why those undefinable not-exactly-beings take issue with the Discworld is not hard to understand. They exist to

maintain order and the flat world riding four elephants atop a gigantic space-turtle is possibly as far from orderly as one could imagine.

For Death to truly become Susan's Granddad tragedy had to strike. Death's relationship with his daughter and her husband became distant to say the least after she left home, and he had very little contact with their daughter who has mostly forgotten her grandfather, aside from a certain familiar feeling from the Biology and Hygiene classroom and some dreams staring Binky, Death's impressive white steed. Mortimer and Ysabell Sto Helit's death had a profound effect on both Death and Susan. The first because he got acquainted with feelings somewhere around the neighbourhood of grief, guilt and regret, and in the process neglected his job yet again. The latter because, first, she became an orphan, and second because she became the closest thing to a Death the Discworld had available and had to step in. While Death tries to learn how to forget (visiting wise old men who are supposed to hold the wisdom of the ages, joining the Klatchian Foreign Legion, drinking magic water, ingesting a lot of alcohol), Susan discovers that her somewhat unusual capacity for becoming inconspicuous and ability to remember the future, even that the three lines that become noticeable on her face in moments of anger are an inherited scar Granddad gave to Dad. The plot of *Soul Music* could very well be an asset to the discussion of the theme at hand, but it will not be analysed because it is less relevant than the two novels already discussed. The essential aspects to take away are that Death has indeed changed, he can grieve, and that Susan now will become more of a focal point. From a storytelling point of view a young girl who is mostly human but nevertheless has a number of Death's abilities seems to be ideally placed to understand humanity from both an outsider's perspective and a human one. And it also places Death in a more active parental role, arguably even more so than when he had a young girl living with him for about thirty-five years, when he was a kind provider but hardly an educator.

The following novel, *Hogfather*, sees this relationship further developed. The key theme in this novel is the role belief plays in the human mind, using, of course, the Discworld mechanisms to explore it. Belief is more or less measurable on the Disc, it is what gives power to the gods, it is what shapes them and Anthropomorphic

Personifications. The Auditors, who take their place as Death's major antagonists once more, have as a target the Hogfather, the Anthropomorphic Personification of the spirit of Hogswatch. Hogswatch night is the longest night of the year, and the celebrations surrounding it mirror Christmas in Roundworld, at least the more whimsical parts of that celebration, the Hogfather is a jolly fat man who wears a red suit and rides a flying sleigh pulled by wild boars and delivers presents to children. This image was, of course, shaped by humanity along thousands and thousands of years, much in the same way that Death became a black-clad, scythe-carrying skeleton log after he was Death. The original purpose behind the worship of this winter god was to make the sun rise once more after the longest night of the year, which it will not happen if the god dies (Pratchett 1996, 156/409). According to Death the sun will not rise, all that will happen is that a ball of fire will appear in the sky. Since the combined efforts of Susan and her Granddad thwart the Auditors' plan, to a large extent the reader is left wondering what the difference is exactly, and what it would actually mean for the sun not to rise. Death explains the difference to his granddaughter:

> 'Now… Tell me…' [said Susan.]
>
> WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T SAVED HIM?
>
> 'Yes! The sun would have risen just the same, yes?'
>
> NO.
>
> 'Oh, come *on*. You can't expect me to believe *that.* It's an astronomical *fact*.'
>
> THE SUN WOULD NOT HAVE RISEN.
>
> 'Really? Then what would have happened, pray?'
>
> A MERE BALL OF FLAMING GAS WOULD HAVE ILUMINATED THE WORLD.
>
> They walked in silence for a moment.
>
> 'Ah,' said Susan dully. 'Trickery with words. I would have thought you'd have been more literal-minded than that.'
>
> I AM NOTHING IF NOT LITERAL-MINDED. TRICKERY WITH WORDS IS WHERE *HUMANS* LIVE.
>
> 'All right,' said Susan. 'I'm not stupid. You're saying humans need *fantasies* to make life bearable.'
>
> (…) NO. HUMANS NEED FANTASY TO BE HUMAN. TO BE THE PLACE WHERE THE FALLING ANGEL MEETS THE RISING APE.
>
> 'Tooth fairies? Hogfathers? Little –'

YES. AS PRACTICE. YOU HAVE TO START OUT LEARNING TO BELIEVE THE *LITTLE* LIES.

'So we can believe the big ones?'

YES. JUSTICE. MERCY. DUTY. THAT SORT OF THING.

'They're not the same at all!'

YOU THINK SO? THEN TAKE THE UNIVERSE AND GRIND IT DOWN TO THE FINEST POWDER AND SIEVE IT THROUGH THE FINEST SIEVE AND THEN *SHOW* ME ONE ATOM OF JUSTICE, ONE MOLECULE OF MERCY. AND YET – Death waved a hand. AND YET YOU ACT AS IF THER IS SOME IDEAL ORDER IN THE WORLD, AS IF THERE IS SOME… SOME *RIGHTNESS* IN THE UNIVERSE BY WHICH IT MAY BE JUDGED.

'Yes, but people have *got* to believe that, or what's the *point* –'

MY POINT EXACTLY. (Pratchett 1996b, 421-423)

Death might have been shown to have some difficulty in understanding humanity on an individual level, but he certainly seems to have a grasp on what it means to be part of humanity as a whole. These words might have been spoken by fictional characters, but one line in particular seems to go beyond the purposes of the plot: "Man needs fantasy to be human. To be the place where the falling angel meets the rising ape." This line may very well not be just about belief and how it is an intrinsically human construct as befits the theme of the novel, it could be a direct message from the author to the reader referring to imagination in general and the fiction that relies on it. There is no clear evolutionist theory in the Discworld. Gods exist and play games with Humanity (a collective name that probably includes all other sapient species), but they generally do not seem to claim credit for creating life (actually, gods depend on the belief of their worshipers to survive, so it stands to reason that they were created by them), so evolution is not out of the question. Angels in turn do not seem to feature heavily in any of the more prominent religions that are described in the Discworld novels. Therefore, the "falling angel meeting the rising ape" image is much more appropriate to Roundworld than to the Discworld. This side of Death is not often seen, that of someone who actually seems to admire humanity, his main reaction thus far being best described as curiosity, but in this novel that admiration shines through. He not only takes on a sort of patriarchal role within his own household, he shows he feels responsible for the world.

Another key aspect to mention about *Hogfather* directly relates to the fact about *Thief of Time* that will be most relevant to this study. And that is that the Auditors use their powers of manipulating reality to turn into wolves, to chase down the primitive form of the Hogfather. They had hitherto appeared only as mere suggestions of empty robes and for the first time they become a living being. This being the first instance where a parallel is drawn between the journeys of Death and the Auditors on their way to understand life, the main difference being that Death first experienced humanity due to a kind impulse and the Auditors due to a violent one.

The last of the Death-centric novels sees the arch that was started in *Mort* come full circle. That arch sees a being that is not supposed to feel feel and reject the experience, next that being is gifted/cursed with a life of his own, and finally that being ends up not only understanding humanity but wishing to protect it. In the first novels the being in question is, of course, the Anthropomorphic Personification of Death, in *Thief of Time* that being is a particular Auditor. The denomination for this particular Auditor, Lady Myria LeJean, as a being is deserved because she is an individual, she has a body. In fact, that is part of the point that is being made in the novel. The Auditors had given in to the temptation of meddling physically in the Discworld once already, becoming wolves to finish the job the assassin they had hired had started but failed to accomplish during the events of *Hogfather*, and now feel that having an envoy in a human body is the next logical step so they can make sure there are no more failures, the ultimate objective being the construction of a clock that is so accurate that instead of measuring time creates and therefore stops it. The logic of that statement, and the philosophical interpretations thereof, is not up for discussion here. The point is that the Auditors want the world to be ordered, life to stop being unpredictable, they want the world to stop. And they want no mistakes. Their mistake is to think that they can only appear human. Lady LeJean, because she has a human body and needs to understand it, becomes human. The non-race that has wanted life to be stopped is only truly defeated when they become alive. In the meantime, while Susan is actively trying to stop the Auditor's plan, Death is trying to reunite the Horsemen of the Apocalypse in an attempt to behave as humanity should

expect them to, and showing some sentimentality, nostalgia even, for the way things were in the past in the process.

*

After looking closely at key aspects of the novels centred on Death, it is time to sum up the human events that influenced him, the events that turned him from the Anthropomorphic Personification of death to Susan's Granddad. First, he takes on a humanoid shape, shaped by the belief of humanity; then the most powerful wizard of his age, and several following ages, Alberto Malich, performs a ritual meant to bind Death backwards and ends up bound to Death, becoming his manservant and being allowed to live in Death's own realm, where time is not real; two thousand years later, he finds a girl whose parents were killed and takes her into his household for reasons that remain mysterious to everyone but himself, curiosity being pointed out as the most likely; thirty five years after that, seeing that his adopted daughter is unhappy, he hires an apprentice in a not very subtle attempt to find her a husband, learning in the process of switching characteristics with said apprentice what it is like to be human, but ultimately rejecting the experience; because of the interest he took in humanity, going as far as to experience it partially, he is deemed unfit to be the Death of the Discworld by the Auditors of Reality and given an hourglass, a lifetimer, a life and a time to die; in consequence, as Bill Door he experiences mortality; after overcoming his short-lived mortality he actually finds he has an emotional connection of sorts with one of the by-products of his time away from the job, the Death of Rats; when his daughter and son-in-law die he actually grieves, propelling his granddaughter to discover her inherited abilities, and even taking on something akin to a parental role in her life; when the Auditors of Reality hire an assassin to kill a fellow Anthropomorphic Personification, he does what he can to save him and guides his granddaughter to do what he cannot; finally, as he struggles to reconnect with his friends, the other Horsemen of the Apocalypse, he plays a small part in helping Susan teach the Auditors of Reality something about humanity.

The starting point for this dissertation was an attempt to understand how criticism sees fantasy, and these novels go along with a number of aspects that were mentioned in that first chapter. Putting satire and comedy aside, which are aspects that are consistently

present in the Discworld novels, the factor that is essential to mention is the drawing of inspiration from folklore. The focus points of belief that are so important and world-shaping in these novels are so easily recognizable by the readers because of that, which only adds to the intended effect. Some of those easily recognizable sources of inspiration go as far back as classical times, Bilious, the oh god of Hangovers (who springs into being due to the surplus of belief that is caused by the attempt on the Hogfather's life) appeared already dressed in white and wearing little crown of vine leaves (Pratchett 1996, 169), a type of headdress favoured by the gods that populated Mount Olympus. The inspiration behind the Hogfather, on the other hand is much more recent, him being a clear avatar for Father Christmas. Death's own appearance, the Grim Reaper, is so ubiquitous in folklore (the word being employed here with the same latitude as in Pratchett and Simpson's volume) that it warrants an 18-pages-long chapter in Pratchett and Simpson's *The Folklore of Discworld* (Pratchett and Simpson 2014, 477-495).

Also in the first chapter of this dissertation it has been maintained that one of the most important uses of fantasy is to take the non-human to explore the human, an aspect that will be recurrently mentioned in this dissertation. Pratchett uses creatures as far from human and alive as possible to deal with matters relating to life as a human. One obvious reason for this is because it is funny, but other reasons can be taken more seriously, such as: an outsider's point of view; an analytical perspective. Humans know what it is like to be human even if only intuitively and not rationally. Humans or other living creatures cannot discover what it is like to be alive, they just are. Only creatures that are not can discover what it is like to become (alive). Death was not alive, nor were the Auditors, they are the ones that discover what it was like to become an individual, they discovered what it was to become a "self".

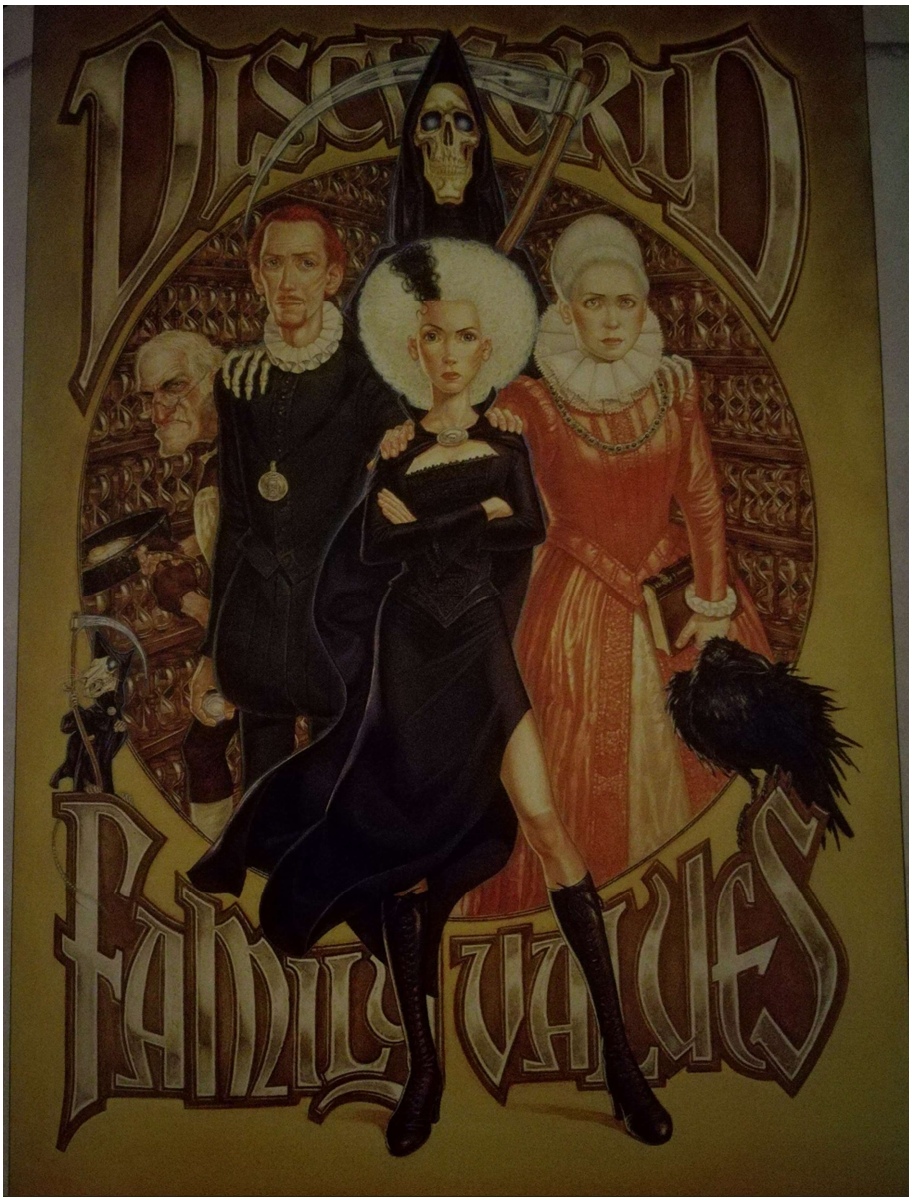

Figure 2. Death's "Family" (Paul Kidby, in Pratchett and Kidby 2004)

Chapter 3 – Accepting your Fellow Man (or Dwarf, or Troll, or Undead, or Golem or even Goblin): How the Anhk-Morpork City Watch becomes a Multicultural Beacon

> 'I never shook hands wid no king before,' said Detritus [a troll]. 'No dwarf, either, come to dat.'
>
> 'You shook hands with me once,' said Cheery [a dwarf].
>
> 'Watchmen don't count,' said Detritus firmly. 'Watchmen is *watchmen*.' (Pratchett 1999, 447)

> Samuel Vimes and Carrot Ironfoundersson are both policemen, and "police" comes, via Latin, from the Greek *politeia*, "citizenship." Thus policemen are explicitly citizens, members of civilization. Vimes and Carrot are also both, as has been noted above, explicitly men of the city. They usually participate in stories revolving in no small part around the way we organize our social life together and the power-relations this involves (Haberkorn 2007, 334).

Ankh-Morpork, the Big Wahoonie, is the largest city on the Discworld and every species on the Disc is eventually drawn there by its mysterious lure. Many if not all who were born there often ask themselves why anyone would want to migrate to such a smelly and dangerous city, even if they do not emigrate themselves. Those species include, but are not limited to: humans, dwarfs, trolls, an array of different types of undead, gnomes, golems, Igors (which strictly speaking is more of a clan with a very particular surgery-based culture than a species) and even goblins. Of course the arrival of many of those species has a comedic and/or satirical purpose, such as the man in *Reaper Man* who inherited vampirism because it came with the estate, or the Igor who, at the end of *The Fifth Elephant*, came to the big city because he was unemployable at his own home country for forgetting to lisp and believing stitching should not be noticeable, but the point is that Ankh-Morpork elevates the concept of cultural diversity to a whole new level. Due to a certain number of factors, which will be discussed in this chapter, the City Watch, by *Raising Steam*, houses representatives of the greatest number of species of any group in the city and, since Ankh-Morpork is the most diverse city on the Disc, the Discworld. The purpose of this chapter is to see how the Watch grew into that police

force, and more importantly, how the novels that centre on it and its leader, Sam Vimes, are ideally positioned to deal with matters relating to social inclusion, be they racial and cultural prejudice or hatred and the overcoming thereof or social matters of other natures.

Arguably all the novels in this series have something to contribute to this theme, and as such they will indeed all be mentioned, but due to their number some will have a brighter light shined on them than others. The Watch eventually grows so large that it or its members start making appearances in most of the Discworld novels, mainly, but not exclusively, on those set in Ankh-Morpork. The novels that will be considered to belong in the "Watch series" in this study are those that have a particular structure, one that is reminiscent of detective fiction: a crime, invariably a murder, is committed and the watchmen proceed to solve it. Those novels are, in publication order[5]: *Guards! Guards!*; *Men at Arms*; *Feet of Clay*; *Jingo*; *The Fifth Elephant*; *Night Watch*; *Thud!* and *Snuff*. The two that will be more fully analysed are *Men at Arms* and *Jingo* for introducing takes on two different types of discrimination, the first based on physical appearance and the second on country of origin.

3.1. *Guards! Guards!, Men at Arms*

This is the novel where Captain Sam Vimes, the alcoholic and discredited captain of the Night Watch of the City Guard, and his subordinates are introduced. He is a copper. There are other words for the type of job he does, watchman being the most commonly used in Ankh-Morpork and policeman being one that bears particular meaning. But what he is is a copper. And even as he rises through the Watch's ranks, and even as he reluctantly scales the social ladder, he never stops being a copper. The topic at hand being social inclusion, this mindset becomes absolutely essential to understand it. More so than the plot itself, apart from a few details, two of which pertaining to particular characters: the very existence of Corporal Nobby Nobbs and the way the then Lance-Constable Carrot was raised. Nobby is described as being considered human by default, and as needing a

[5] The order of publication does not wholly match the chronological order of the events they narrate (due to general reminiscing and to some time-travel in *Night Watch*).

card to prove that he has indeed been deemed human, a comic detail for sure but one that, accidentally or due to an impressive amount of foresight, foreshadows the type of corps the Watch will become: he is the least human a human can be and he ended up in the Night Watch. And Carrot Ironfoundersson is a dwarf. He was found by dwarfs and adopted and raised by them, so, even if he is rather tall and genetically human, he is, culturally, the way it truly matters for them, a dwarf. Another key aspect to be emphasised about *Guards! Guards!* is how ridiculously inconsequential the Night Watch was at that time. Crime being self-regulated due to the legitimization of certain criminal guilds, the Night Watch existed simply to exist and its members were misfits who had no place elsewhere and who were encouraged, mostly by one another, to avoid catching criminals. During the course of the plot they overcome that cowardly doctrine and save the city from a noble dragon, effectively setting the stage for the following novel.

Quite often the key information about the themes of the novels is handed to the reader before he even starts reading the story, be it with the title or the blurb on the back cover, and in *Men at Arms* this is particularly true:

> 'Be a MAN in the City Watch! The Watch needs MEN!' But what its's *got* includes Corporal Carrot (technically a dwarf), Lance-constable Cuddy (really a dwarf), Lance-constable Detritus (a troll), Lance-constable Angua (a woman… most of the time) and Corporal Nobbs (disqualified from the human race for shoving). (Pratchett 1993b)

The operative word is "men", usually that would put the reader in mind of males, but this is a fantastic world and the main focus seems to be regarding species rather than genre. It is not that the genre facet is not addressed as well, but it is not wise to jump to conclusions too early. The title itself has a certain duality in it, "men at arms" being an expression usually associated with military corps, but in this case also hinting at the instrument that plays a very big part in the story: a firearm, the Disc's first and only.

Prejudice, be it towards species, race or gender, is not only at the core of this novel but at the core of the Watch series as a whole, and the first pages of the novel prop it up immediately as such. At its very beginning Carrot Ironfoundersson writes to his dwarf parents, sharing some exciting news: "I have been made Corporal!! (…) because we have got new recruits because the Patrician (…) has agreed the Watch must reflect the ethnic makeup of the City" (Pratchett 1993, 7). These short lines speak volumes about this major

aspect of the novel. There has been a decision from the government, meaning the benignly tyrannical Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, to make a body that represents the city in a more ethnically complete manner. Carrot's point of view is quite innocent and he does not even consider the political implications of the news he has just shared with his parents, or any sort of alternate agenda in them, something that is quite characteristic of him because a defining point of his personality is to believe in the good in people so earnestly that they end up showing it in spite of themselves.

Sam Vimes, on the other hand, is not just cynical, he is cynicism personified and his private thoughts on the matter paint a different, and probably more realistic, picture:

> 'With the new recruits, I mean,' said Vimes, meaningfully. 'You remember, sir?'
>
> The ones you [Vetinari] told me I had to have? he added in the privacy of his head. They weren't to go in the *Day* Watch, of course. And those bastards in the Palace Guard wouldn't take them, either. Oh, no. Put 'em in the Night Watch, because it's a joke anyway and no-one'll really see 'em. No-one important, anyway.
>
> Vimes had only given in because he knew it wouldn't be his problem for long.
>
> It wasn't as if he was speciesist, he told himself. But the Watch was a job for men. (Pratchett 1993b, 25)

The reaction of these two characters to Vetinari's decision and the duality it represents shows what leadership in the Watch will become. That duality, however, will become clearer in later novels. At this point Vimes does seem quite prejudiced, but the thoughts that truly illustrate his usual thinking are: "The ones you told me I had to have?", he does not enjoy being told what to do, and in fact Vetinari eventually learns that forcing Vimes to do something against his will is a sure way to make him not only do it but to excel at it (telling him how to do things, and ordering him not to do them, are a different matter altogether). A vexed and reluctant Sam Vimes is an efficient Sam Vimes. Those are characteristics that become more pronounced later in the Watch series, and at this juncture it is this apparent prejudice that should be addressed. Vimes is often compared to stone, his nickname is even "Old Stoneface Vimes" (a nickname he shares with a regicidal ancestor), and he his indeed unwavering in his convictions. This matter of the new recruits merely requires him to redefine some of his established definitions, which he quickly does. There is another major objective to be accomplished with this apparent speciesism/misogyny, and that is to show one of the most important pieces of misdirection

that occurs: the w–. The w– occurs a number of times but perhaps the most misleading instance occurs in the following scene, one that also addresses both the government's choice regarding the new recruits and the reaction the Captain of the Watch had to it:

> 'I don't think [Vimes] likes the new recruits.'
>
> The other thing about Constable Carrot was that he was incapable of lying.
>
> 'Well, he doesn't like trolls much,' he said. 'We couldn't get a word out of him all day when he heard we had to advertise for a troll recruit. And then we had to have a dwarf, otherwise they'd be trouble. I'm a dwarf, too, but the dwarfs here don't believe it.'
>
> 'You don't say?' said Angua, looking up at him.
>
> 'My mother had me by adoption.'
>
> 'Oh. Yes, but I'm not a troll *or* a dwarf,' said Angua sweetly.
>
> 'No, but you're a w–'
>
> Angua stopped. 'That's it, is it? Good grief! This *is* the Century of the Fruitbat, you know. Ye gods, does he really think like that?'
>
> 'He's a bit set in his ways.'
>
> 'Congealed, I should think.'
>
> 'The Patrician said we had to have a bit of representation from the minority groups,' said Carrot. (Pratchett 1993b, 27-28)

The thing about the w– is that only three people, maybe four, in the Watch know what comes after, and they would be Angua herself, of course, Captain Vimes, and unlikely as it may seem, Sergeant Colon, possibly also Corporal Nobbs. Carrot, however, is completely unaware of this fact. This ignorance is quite telling of the overall dynamic of the Watch, and crucial to understand how it changes. Carrot is the heir to the Ankh-Morpork throne, and, possibly because the Discworld runs on narrative imperative, has a knack for being obeyed. But in the Watch he is just a Corporal, an integral part of it for sure, but still very close to being the new recruit. When asked by Lance-Constable Angua if he knows why she was one of the three new recruits his, as always, honest answer is: "'Of course. Minority group representation. One troll, one Dwarf, one woman.'" (Pratchett 1993, 310). This conversation occurs long after the reader is aware that Angua is in fact a werewolf and may or may not have assumed that that is the word initiated by the w–. That stated information comes later, however, when Carrot asks Colon if he knew Angua is a werewolf:

> '[Captain Vimes] sort of said, "Fred, she's a damn werewolf. I don't like it any more than you do, but Vetinari says we've got to take one of them as well, and a werewolf's better than a vampire or a zombie, and that's all there is to it." That's what he hinted.' (Pratchett 1993b, 322)

It should be pointed out that at this point in the story Carrot, a Corporal, is technically outranked by Fred Colon, a Sergeant, and yet the latter calls the first "sir" in that very conversation. Pertaining more to the matter at hand at hand, however, is Vimes's opinion of the undead. Vimes's dislike for the undead is established early on when a list is revealed to the reader: "A man can be defined by the things he hates. There were quite a lot of things that Vimes hated. Assassins were near the top of the list, just after kings and the undead" (Pratchett 1993b, 61). Zombies and Vampires eventually do make it onto the Watch, which just goes to show that Vimes's convictions do not extend to his prejudices. Kings and Assassins, however, are another matter. The first are given power merely for being born, they are supreme rulers whose very existence enthrals humankind. In Vimes's own words, answering Carrot when he points out that the Patrician too is a supreme ruler: "But he doesn't wear a crown or sit on a throne and he doesn't tell you it's *right* that he should rule" (Pratchett 1993b, 70). Assassins kill for money, so there is hardly a need for further reasoning.

The w– and the discovery of its meaning is a useful analysis to make and one that is adjacent to several core themes of the novel, but the fact that none of the characters were in fact misogynous (Vimes and Colon using it as a prelude to the word werewolf and Carrot being mistaken in using it as a prelude to woman when speaking about others), but rather prejudiced against the undead, or differently-alive as some would prefer to be called, somewhat lessens, while not actually nullifying, the weight of misogyny in the ever-present word: men. An analysis of the novel locates many more themes that pertain to the way humanity behaves other than the mostly only apparent misogyny. As the characters separate, those themes become more differentiated, themes such as: the most speciesist and prejudiced attitudes, be it the ages-old vendetta between dwarfs and trolls, or the humans' prejudices about the other sapient races, whose protagonists are Cuddy and Detritus; the way humanity influences the species around it, namely dogs, a storyline centred on Angua and Gaspode; the willingness humanity has to follow a leader, a

tendency that seems to shin through around Carrot; and, not least important, the way Sam Vimes, more than occasionally through Carrot, and his way of seeing the world influence the Watch.

All of the themes mentioned are not an exclusive concern of *Men at Arms*, even the matter of gender prejudice. There is one theme however, that is a major concern of this novel but not of the series as a whole: violence caused by firearms. This specific type of violence is brought about by a device that uses an explosive powder called powder No 1, whose chemical properties are remarkably similar to gunpowder; that is shaped like a bowless crossbow with a pipe mounted on it, a description which would put most people in mind of a rifle; and whose name is gonne, a word almost as similar to "gun" as it is to "gone"; for those reasons this theme will be hereafter referred to as gonne-violence.

3.1.1. Corruptive Power: Gonne-Violence and Monarchy

Since gonne-violence is the most novel-specific of those five main themes, it will be the first to be more closely analysed. The maker of the gonne is first introduced as "the most dangerous man in the world" (Pratchett 1993, 74) and it is further explained that he has never harmed a living being. This man is Leonard da Quirm, the Discworld's foremost inventor, a genius plagued by random inspiration. Leonard is a very useful literary device because anything one would not readily expect to emerge naturally on the Discworld, such as guns, submarines or post-its, can exist because this man, who is likely to sketch the plans for a deadly war machine on the edge of a paper whose space is mostly taken by a drawing of a bird in flight as an afterthought, can invent it. The similarities between the gonne and Roundworld guns are of course essential to emphasise to establish what the gonne is, making the effects it has on people all the more significant. The first hint that there is something about the gonne that changes people is when young Edward d'Eath, the sole heir to nothing but debts of the d'Eaths, an impoverished aristocratic family, first holds it:

> Edward picked it up, cradled it for a while, and found that it seemed to fit his arm and shoulder very snugly.
>
> *You're mine.*

> And that, more or less, was the end of Edward d'Eath. Something continued for a while, but what it was, and how it thought, wasn't entirely human. (Pratchett 1993b, 68)

The scene above occurs before the gonne is described in detail or named, so the reader already associates the object with something capable of stealing humanity before they associate it with a Roundworld gun. It is very important that the look, mechanics and capability for destruction come after the effect it can have, that they come after its voice speaks and claims ownership of the host. At this point the gonne is not exactly a weapon yet, it is an ineffable force with an immensely corruptive power. The missing detailed description of the gonne comes soon after when it is inspected. In the scene where it occurs, aside from Edward, who brings the gonne for inspection, and Bjorn Hammerhock, a dwarf who takes an interest in mechanisms, the one who will be doing the inspection, there is a third presence, one whose speech in print is immediately recognizable for any Pratchett reader (or anyone who has read Chapter 2 of this dissertation):

> The ceiling of the workshop was only about five feet above the floor.That was more than tall enough for a dwarf.
>
> OW, said a voice that no-one heard.
>
> Hammerhock looked at the thing clamped in the vice, and picked up a screwdriver.
>
> OW.
>
> 'Amazing,' he said. 'I *think* that moving this tube down the barrel forces the, er, six chambers to slide along, presenting a new one to the, er, firing hole. That seems clear enough. The triggering mechanism is really just a tinderbox device. The spring… *here*… has rusted through. I can easily replace that. You know,' he said, looking up, 'this is a very interesting device. With the chemicals in the tubes and all. Such a *simple* idea. Is it a clown thing? Some kind of automatic slap-stick?' (Pratchett 1993b, 80-81)

The extra entity in the room is Death, of course, who has come to reap the gonne's first victim. His unmistakable presence from the very start, rather than just after Bjorn dies, is more than a mere hint at the killing potential of the gonne. This scene is in fact quite important for the analysis of several other themes, namely the not so small detail that it was a dwarf that got a hole in his chest, and the fact that he thought Edward had some connection with clowns when the reader is well aware of his status as an Assassin, a hint which is fairly easy to miss but which will turn out to be immensely important. The description itself is of course overly technical, very possibly designed not so much to confuse, but to keep the image of the gonne ambiguous for a while longer. Vimes's later

one is much more pragmatic for visualisation purposes: “the stock of a crossbow with a pipe on top of it.” (Pratchett 1993b, 177). Throughout the novel the watchmen come across the effects of the gonne, such as holes in chests, holes in walls, and metal pellets and tubes, and the ever-present scent of fireworks. Those elements help the coppers, and readers, figure out how the successive murders are taking place, but they do not contribute much to the analysis at hand. The escalating influence of the gonne, however, is the central issue. Page 149 is particularly relevant to mention, since in it there is a short scene in which a character is wondering what to do about Vimes and there is a voice that says: “kill him”.

For the sake of this discussion a key point of the plot should be revealed now, one that is only discovered at a much further point in the novel: by this point Edward is dead, and the gonne is in the possession of Dr Cruces, the Head of the Assassins’ Guild. Cruces follows the gonne’s “advice” and attempts to kill Vimes. In the ensuing chaos a beggar girl dies. This girl’s death and Hammerhock’s will have a particular significance at a further point in the story. After witnessing first-hand what destructive power the gonne possesses, Vimes deduces quite a lot about how the Assassins might have come to own it:

> So. A new *type* of weapon. Much, much faster than a bow. The Assassins wouldn’t like that *at all.* They weren’t even keen on bows. The Assassins preferred to kill up close.
>
> So they’d put the… the *gonne* safely under lock and key. The gods alone knew how they’d come by it in the first place. And a few senior Assassins would know about it. They’d pass on the secret: *beware of things like this…* (Pratchett 1993b, 178-179)

The only thing that is not quite correct in this deduction is that the gods were not alone in the knowledge of how the Assassins got custody of the gonne. Vetinari gave it to them, a fact that is revealed earlier in the novel in a conversation between a much less deranged, if quite as entitled, Cruces and the Patrician. This weapon is one of a kind and it is hard to decide destroying something like that, particularly for Vetinari, the man who keeps the most dangerous man in the world locked away, but comfortable and alive. And his logic is not actually new, this being the man who legalized the Thieves’ Guild and made them responsible for punishing unlicensed thieves, which worked, actually bringing crime down.

Thus far in the novel words have been attributed to the gonne, short phrases, impulses, words that might have originated in the gonne or in the mind of the person holding it, merely inspired by the firearm. But in the following scene an actual conversation takes place between the gonne and someone who will shortly afterwards be revealed to be Cruces:

> The gonne lay on the table. There was a bluish sheen to the metal. Or, perhaps, not so much a sheen as a glisten. And, of course, that was only the oil. It was clearly a thing of metal. It couldn't possibly be alive.
>
> And yet…
>
> And yet…
>
> 'They say it was only a beggar girl in the Guild.'
>
> *Well? What of it? She was a target of opportunity. That was not my fault. That was your fault. I am merely the gonne. Gonnes don't kill people. People kill people.*
>
> 'You killed Hammerhock! The boy said you fired yourself! And he'd repaired you!'
>
> *You expect gratitude? He would have made another gonne.*
>
> 'Was that a reason to kill him?'
>
> *Certainly. You have no understanding.*
>
> Was the voice in his head or in the gonne? He couldn't be certain. Edward had said there was a voice… it said that everything you wanted, it could give you… (Pratchett 1993b, 279)

In spite of the slightly mispronounced well known slogan, what is implied here and further along is that the gonne does kill people, but this voice and whether or not it truly belongs to the object is something that will still be discussed. The focus here is Cruces waning sanity. He is not sure if he is under the gonne's influence or if it is in some way alive. This budding insanity culminates soon afterwards:

> Ten thousand little earthbound stars… and he could turn off any one he wanted, just like that. It was like being a god.
>
> It was amazing how sounds were so audible up here. It was like being a god. (…)
>
> *This* was power. The power he had below, the power to say: do this, do that… that was just something human, but this… this was like being a god. (Pratchett 1993b, 316)

Feeling like a god seems to be the final step in Cruces' delusion. But it is not that far-fetched that someone who is used to holding the power over life and death of single individuals in their hands, someone who has no qualms about "inhuming" people, and

now has the power to kill anyone at any time would feel that way. It seems at this point that Cruces too has stopped being Cruces like Edward before him to become "something not entirely human". The gonne's voice could merely be another sign of that delusional insanity that shines through when this man repeatedly claims to feel like a got. But then someone else holds the gonne, someone who, in spite of having his fair share of violent impulses, is not predisposed to murder:

> Vimes rolled back, gonne in both hands.
>
> It moved. Suddenly the stock was against his shoulder and his finger was on the trigger.
>
> *You're mine.*
>
> *We don't need him any more.*
>
> The shock of the voice was so great that he cried out.
>
> He swore afterwards that he didn't pull the trigger. It moved of its own accord, pulling his finger with it. The gonne slammed into his shoulder and a six-inch hole appeared in the wall by the Assassin's head, spraying him with plaster. (Pratchett 1993b, 354)

This scene certainly seems to give credit to the theory that the gonne indeed uses people to kill, rather than the other way around. Throughout the chase the gonne is repeatedly narrated as moving itself and guiding the holder, driving him to its own purposes:

The gonne means power over life and death. That much is fairly straightforward, what is not is how fantastical this weapon actually is. From the narrative point of view it is fairly easy to conclude that the gonne is pure corruption, and that merely holding it awakens some sort of murderous impulse and that one would have to have something like supernatural goodness in them to be able to ignore its siren song and destroy it (which Carrot does, in spite of the fact that it is such a perfect materialization of power, as is described in pages 361 and 362). A simple and possibly accurate interpretation. Another is that that the gonne is just a gun, and that humanity is indeed predisposed to blame its own murderous instincts on the weapon rather than on its own buried desires upon which the weapon simply enables them to act. The main point of introducing gonne-violence to the Discworld may very well be to make one ponder on that question, rather than answering it.

The corruptive effect of power is not only considered regarding weapons, the weapon gives one individual power over another. At least over one other at a time. But there is another type of power that is a very important part of the narrative of *Men at Arms*: the right to rule. And in Ankh-Morpork that concept is mostly connected to kings. Ankh-Morpork has a throne and an heir to put on it: Carrot Ironfoundersson. In *Guards! Guards!* most of his backstory is told: he was adopted by dwarfs after his family is killed under mysterious circumstances, and all that was found then was a sword, an old sword. Furthermore, he has a birthmark on his arm in the shape of a crown. Since the Discworld runs on narrative imperative those facts are very nearly proof enough, at least for the reader. Most even if not all characters, however, require a little bit more proof. And since the city actually works under the rule of Vetinari, even if they have that more tangible proof they are hardly likely to hand the city over to anyone else in any case. Nevertheless, Edward finds that proof, and the stealing of the gonne is part of his plan to leave the city without its key leaders to pave the way for Carrot to take the throne. A plan Cruces carries on after killing Edward, mistakenly killing a handmaid of Queen Molly (leader of the Beggars' Guild, the oldest and one of the most influential guilds in the city), managing to actually wound the Patrician and, worst of all, killing Cuddy, in the process. Carrot being presented as a fantasy hero in the "hidden monarch" tradition is something that is explored by Gideon Haberkorn in his essay *Cultural Palimpsests: Terry Pratchett's New Fantasy Heroes* (Heberkorn 2007, 331). Of the points made there that might be relevant to this essay even if not this chapter, such as the fact that Pratchett's heroes tend to be unconventional or how the author reinvents the concept because of that, there is one that is worth highlighting in this dissertation: Carrot' choice to remain hidden. At this point, this study will endeavour to look at how Carrot takes his place in the city, and at how his personality is a defining factor not only for his influence but for his choices, and also to a certain extent how his conduct is dependent on his admiration for Samuel Vimes.

A key point about Carrot's personality is his simplicity and honesty. However,

> Carrot was not stupid. He was direct, and honest, and good-natured and honourable in all his dealings. In Ankh-Morpork this would normally have added up to 'stupid' in any case and would have given him the survival quotient of a jellyfish in a blast furnace, but there were a couple of other factors. One was a punch that even trolls had learned to

> respect. The other was that Carrot was genuinely, almost supernaturally, likable. (Pratchett 1993b, 48-49)

Sergeant Colon calls this likability "krisma (…) bags of it", for the reader's benefit Angua eventually comes to realise that the word the Sergeant means is "charisma" (Pratchett 1993b, 48/52). And that word does summarise quite well how Carrot is seen by most Ankh-Morpork citizens, including many of the Watch. The words "everyone likes/knows Corporal/Captain Carrot" are spoken extremely often, Vimes and Angua say it often enough in the privacy of their own heads, but perhaps the instance that best illustrates how widespread this likability is, one that ends up being quite ludicrous, is not spoken by someone close to him, but by as distant a character as possible in a city: a gargoyle (a species of troll that has evolved in the city and likes to populate rooftops). In pages 159 and 160 Vimes has a particularly comical conversation with one such creature, made the funnier because gargoyles have permanently open mouths. The scene itself shows just how widespread the knowledge of who Carrot is is.

This charisma makes him powerful. Powerful in a way as different as possible from the single-minded destructiveness of the gonne. Angua, who will go on to have a romantic relationship with Carrot, is best who describes this power:

> He could lead armies, Angua thought. He really could. Some people have inspired whole countries to great deeds because of the power of their vision. And so could he. Not because he dreams about marching hordes, or world domination, or an empire of a thousand years. Just because he thinks that everyone's really decent underneath and would get along just fine if only they made the effort, and he believes that so strongly it burns like a flame which is bigger than he is. He's got a dream and we're all part of it, so that shapes the world around him. And the weird thing is that no-one wants to disappoint him. It'd be like kicking the biggest puppy in the universe. It's a kind of magic. (Pratchett 1993b, 244)

It might just be a kind of magic, the Disc runs on narrative imperative after all, and he is the heir to the throne. The relationship he has with the city just corroborates this theory. He is a policeman, which as he likes to point out means "man of the city", and for someone who grew up in a mine he not only fits right in but actually moulds what happens around him. Angua, when she first sees him through her wolf eyes, describes his walking around the city in the following manner: "He walked through the city like a tiger through tall

grass, or a hubland[6] bear across the snow, wearing the landscape like a skin–" (Pratchett 1993b, 113). The predator imagery might give the wrong impression, and it should be kept in mind that Angua is a predator herself when she calls upon the imagery. Given Carrot's personality what should be emphasised is that those animals are at the top of their food-chain, they do not have to worry about being preyed on, and they "wear the landscape like a skin", in other words, they are a perfect match with their habitat and have nothing to fear, they are, in a way, kings.

Leading comes naturally to Carrot. When Vetinari pushes Vimes a bit too far and causes him to start his retirement early, or at least causes him to act as if he was retired, Carrot immediately takes on the role: there is no thought process, he does not ponder or plan to do it, he just starts behaving like a leader, even though he is outranked by Fred Colon. The rest of the watchmen follow his lead, and the end result is that he starts enlisting more and more beings, be they trolls, dwarfs or human. This process seems so natural to all that are a part of it that when Vimes comes back into the fold he finds it necessary to remind the watchmen under him that he still is in fact Captain. Vimes is not known to be slow to anger, and when his power is being effectively even if unintentionally usurped, he does not get angry exactly and he actually trusts Carrot's instinct, he simply does not follow Carrot just because he is Carrot (Pratchett 1993b, 343-344). But the true question is who Carrot truly is, what kind of person he is, not his ancestry or how people perceive him, and there is one particular moment, the one where proof of his ancestry is provided by Cruces, that shows exactly what kind of man Carrot is:

> Something Vimes had learned as a young guard drifted up from memory. If you *have* to look along the shaft of an arrow from the wrong end, if a man has you entirely at his mercy, then hope like hell that man is an evil man. Because the evil like power, power over people, and they want to see you in fear. They want you to know you're going to die. So they'll talk. They'll gloat.
>
> (…)
>
> 'Exactly. But now we must remove this annoying policeman,' said Cruces.
>
> Vimes felt that he could see all the way along the tube, to the little slug of metal that was soon to launch itself at him…
>
> 'It's a shame,' said Cruces, 'if only you had–'

[6] "Hubland" is the Discworld equivalent of the Roundworld word "polar".

> Carrot stepped in front of the gonne. His arm moved in a blur. There was hardly a sound.
>
> Pray you never face a good man, Vimes thought. He'll kill you with hardly a word. (Pratchett 1993b, 349/360)

There it is: Carrot is a good man. It really is as simple as that. This is a man that after seeing a woman he cares deeply for be shot repeatedly does not only not seek revenge but also utters the words "personal isn't the same as important" (Pratchett 1993, 358). The world is more than ready to view him as a king, but that does not define him. And he does not want to have that political power, which is not to say that he will not take it should it be necessary. An opinion that becomes clear in his final meeting with Vetinari:

> And you, I think, should be promoted to Captain.'
>
> 'Ye-es. I agree, sir. That would be a good thing for Ankh-Morpork. But I will not command the Watch, if tha's what you mean.'
>
> 'Why not?'
>
> 'Because I *could* command the Watch. Because… people should do things because an officer tells them. They shouldn't do it because Corporal Carrot says so. Just because Corporal Carrot is… good at being obeyed.' (Pratchett 1993b, 371)

Carrot sees that the problem with people being so ready to obey him is that they do it for the wrong reasons, or that they might. That is the same reason he agrees with Vimes's views on monarchy, even paraphrasing them later in the meeting quoted above. He believes that people are good at heart and that they should learn that by themselves. According to the logic of the inner-workings of the Discworld, no small measure of the influence Carrot has on the people of Ankh-Morpork can be attributed to the fact that he is part of an established type of story but shorn of the trappings of fantasy this willingness to be led is extremely human all the same. That might just be the point of the existence of a long-awaited heir who deems that the best for the people he is supposed to lead is that they lead themselves.

Humanity may have some tendency to follow one of their number, but as a species they have been known to have no small measure of influence on a number of other species that surround it. As have certain communities had no small measure of influence in others, historically through invasion, but as times progress in other, maybe subtler, ways.

Throughout the novel Angua, with the company of Gaspode, the talking dog, discovers the Dog Guild and the description that ensues may very well be a study on how certain societies dominate others to such a degree that the dominated lose touch with what they originally were. Then again it might be an exercise in animal psychology, or just a simple adventure lived by a reluctant werewolf and a constantly rejected talking dog.

Gaspode is a dog cursed with too much intelligence, and is immediately drawn to Angua, one could say that it is because she is a human with a bit too much animal instinct, but then again, he is a male dog and Angua is quite fetching in either shape. Dwelling on the why is not particularly useful, the main point is that Gaspode and Angua come across the Dog Guild, Ankh-Morpork's answer to street dogs, a feral pack that is led by Big Fido, a tenacious poodle with wolf dreams:

> Dogs were brighter than wolves. Wolves didn't *need* intelligence. They had other things. But dogs… They'd been given intelligence by humans. Whether they wanted it or not. They were certainly more vicious than wolves. They'd got that from humans, too.
>
> Big Fido was forging his band of strays into what the ignorant thought a wolf pack was. A kind of furry killing machine. (Pratchett 1993b, 298)

Big Fido is wrong about wolves and in his angry effort to free himself from their influence he dies. And the worst part of all this is that humans are completely unaware that they have this inherent influence on dogs, it is not that they do not care, that the words "bad dog" are not just an educational phrase to make them behave but that they speak directly to some essential part of the dog over which they have no control. Humans made them, but they do not know what they have truly become. A parallel can certainly be drawn between that and the fact that Roundworld imperial doctrines often claimed to bring "civilization" to "primitive" communities.

3.1.2. Speciesism

However evolved the social dynamics of the canine brethren might be in Ankh-Morpork, they are not from a general perspective a sapient species. Therefore, to study the representation of prejudice in Pratchett it is best to turn to the social dynamics between the most prominent sapient species in Ankh-Morpork, which as of *Men at Arms* are:

Humans, Dwarfs, Trolls and the group of species collectively known as the Undead. Social integration, peaceful coexistence, equality, these are all major themes throughout the Watch series, and this novel sees how the Watch is key to starting the citizens of Ankh-Morpork on the road to a prejudice-free society. Actually reaching that goal is quite unrealistic, but walking the road is just as important.

In that respect there are two main types of reaction to consider, how humans react to "minorities" and the feud between dwarfs and trolls. There is no best place to look to see how these two attitudes play out and change than at what happens when two members of the feuding species are paired up and sent to investigate. Both the way they act towards each other and the speciesist remarks they suffer are subtle, and often not subtle at all, commentaries on Roundworld racism.

Before Cuddy and Detritus are sent on their own the reader must first see what they feel about each other, or rather how they are prejudiced about each other.

> '*–hah! It was too an ambush! And your mother was an ore–*'
>
> (…)
>
> '*–you ambush us too! my great-great-grandfather he at Koom Valley, he tell me!*'
>
> (…)
>
> '*–yeah? you even know who your father is, do you?*'
>
> '–that while you must certainly celebrate your proud ethnic folkways, to profit by the example of my fellow officers here, who have sunk their ancient differences–'
>
> '*–I smash you head, you roguesome dwarfs!*'
>
> (…)
>
> '*–I could take you with one hand tied behind my back!*'
>
> (…)
>
> '*–you get opportunity! I tie BOTH hands behind you back!*'
>
> 'Aargh!'
>
> 'Ooow!' (Pratchett 1993b, 49-50)

After the heated exchange the two recruits start fighting, and when confronted with the idea of separating them, Colon has the following to say:

> 'It's cultural,' said Sergeant Colon, miserably. 'No sense us tryin' to force our culture on 'em, is there? That's speciesist.' (Pratchett 1993b, 50)

The scene above is a starting point and it hardly needs much analyzing: these two groups hate each other on the basis that they always have, and if a reason must be given

a story from a distant ancestor will suffice as justification. And quite simply, even though Carrot states that because they are watchmen Cuddy and Detritus have put that ancestral hate aside, they have not. Still, there are a couple of details that deserve being pointed out. One is the constant use of Cuddy's and Detritus' rank. The only other rank that is constantly used in the scene is Colon's and that can be attributed to the fact that being a sergeant is so intimately connected with his identity, but that is not the case with the dwarf and the troll. It could be because they are new to the Watch and as such the narrator may feel the need to constantly remind the reader that that is so, but in that case Angua should have her rank, which is the same as that of her fellow recruits, constantly attached to her name as well. It becomes likely, then, that this constant reminding on the part of the narrator that the two individuals that are fighting have a common ground is necessary because the characters themselves do not understand yet what that means. On the other hand, it might be because two individuals who are wearing a uniform, the very same that signifies they are part of a group, much like their rank, are not behaving accordingly. The other detail is that Sergeant Colon and Nobby are quite willing to let Cuddy and Detritus carry on with their violence while claiming their inaction is rooted in respect for their culture rather than in obvious cowardice. This is a point where it can clearly be seen that satirical fantasy is a very useful method to use in social commentary. This boiled down attitude of two comical officers of the law looking on at "cultural" violence could certainly be extrapolated to mirror nations that "look on" as well while other nations fight pointless "cultural" wars.

The common ground, then, will be the bridge between the two individuals, and consequently the two cultures. But simply being called by their rank is nowhere near enough, they need to start being coppers, and as the plot progresses that is what is seen to happen, step by step. Some of these steps are well worth a look:

> The young Assassin tried to sneer.
>
> 'Hah! Your uniform doesn't scare *me*,' he said.
>
> Vimes looked down at his battered breastplate and worn mail.
>
> 'You're right,' he said. 'This is not a scary uniform. I'm sorry. Forward, Corporal Carrot and Lance-Constable Detritus.'
>
> The Assassin was suddenly aware of the sunlight being blocked out.

> ‘Now *these*, I think you’ll agree,’ said Vimes, from somewhere behind the eclipse, ‘are scary uniforms.’ (Pratchett 1993b, 57-58)

This scene shows that sometimes to be something you just need to be seen being it, to be asked to show you are it, to wear the uniform of it. Here Vimes, who before was shown to be quite displeased with being stuck with a troll, does not hesitate to use Detritus. He has a useful attribute, being large and intimidating, and the captain makes use of that. The Lance-Constable’s species is not even a consideration.

Not all ranking officers are as blind to species as the captain. The sergeant has a bit more trouble with it, and the fact that the thought that some of the ways the Watch does things might require some species- and gender-specific adaptations has not even crossed his mind does not make the job at hand very easy, and what helps even less is that the recruits keep fighting among themselves:

> There was a *spang!* noise. Cuddy’s crossbow had gone off in his hand. The bolt whiffled past Corporal Nobbs’ ear and landed in the river, where it stuck.
>
> ‘Sorry,’ said Cuddy.
>
> ‘Tsk, tsk,’ said Sergeant Colon.
>
> That was the worst part. It would have been better all round if he’d called the dwarf some names. It would have been better if he’d made it seem that Cuddy was worth an insult.
>
> He turned and walked off towards Pseudopolis Yard.
>
> They heard his muttered comment.
>
> ‘What him say?’ said Detritus.
>
> ‘ “A fine body of *men*”,’ said Angua, going red. (Pratchett 1993b, 87-89)

Adjusting to this new multi-cultural reality is clearly a challenge for all parties involved. The scene above is not the only one to show that. For example, the scene where the proper weapons for a guard are handed out and the recruits take the oath has a similar tone, even if lightened by Carrot’s optimism. But one thing is in fact achieved in the scene quoted above. Colon is equally disappointed with all three recruits, and thus provides what they so desperately need to start functioning as part of the unit: common ground. For a short while after Colon leaves the three have a “transient moment of camaraderie in adversity” (Pratchett 1993b, 90), the two males even find a further thing in common, that they can complain that Colon was being speciesist, which in this case is not all that true, and when Angua points that out they just say:

> ‘Ho, it’s all right for *you*,’ said Cuddy.
> ‘Why?’
> ‘’Cos you a *man*,’ said Detritus.
> Angua was bright enough to pause a moment to think this over.
> ‘A woman,’ she said.
> ‘Same thing.’ (Pratchett 1993b, 89-90)

This short conversation shows both that to other species Angua is not discriminated for her genre at all, because there really is not something to discriminate, and that Cuddy and Detritus actually can agree on something, even if it is that they are being discriminated. This moment of agreement does not last, and when Angua asks her two fellow officers for a drink they remember once again that their species hate each other. Angua finds a way around that and convinces them both to have a drink with her at the same time rather than the three of them having a drink all together, and the fact that they accept is yet another important step. They do not manage to get that particular drink because they stumble upon a corpse. Yet there is an instance a little afterwards where most watchmen of the Night Watch do manage to go for a drink, mostly to process the horrifying image of Bjorn Hammerhock with a hole in his chest. After a short dialogue, interspersed with several instances or slight variations of “They stared at the drinks. They drank the drinks.” Carrot says something that should define the Watch, but that seemed not to have occurred to its members yet: “‘We’re the *City* Watch,’ said Carrot. ‘That doesn’t mean that part of the city who happens to be over four feet tall and made of flesh!’” (Pratchett 1993b, 98). Carrot really does not care about the shape of the citizens, he cares for the City and he believes the Watch represents the city. It is Vimes, however, that actually puts into words the key notion behind that belief: “‘Corporal Carrot, will you stop being a dwarf for two seconds? You’re a guard!” (Pratchett 1993b, 126). This notion that there is no species differentiation in the Watch is something that arises at this very point, with an off-hand remark. Vimes does not have some inclusive philosophy against discrimination, he wants to solve a crime and Carrot’s culture-based squeamishness is getting in the way of that, nevertheless those simple and not-thought-through words say it all: being a guard is about being more than a human, dwarf, troll and so forth, and Vimes puts into words what Carrot was already ready to believe. Later, Carrot will himself be quoted by Sergeant Colon,

when there is a sudden boom in interest in joining the watch: "Ain't no dwarfs or trolls or humans in the Watch, see' said Colon. 'Just Watchmen, see? That's what Corporal Carrot says" (Pratchett 1993b, 302).

The very beginning of *Men at Arms* sees the Night Watch's expansion and impending restructuring due to Sam Vimes's supposed retirement, but then a crime occurs, and not just any crime: a murder. Contrary to what might be expected in a city that takes death rather lightly (the Guild with the elite school is the Assassin's, which is in itself fairly illustrative), murder is not common at all. The particular parameters for suicide in the city are quite wide: "Walking in the night-time alleyways of the Shades was suicide. Asking for a short in a dwarf bar was suicide. Saying 'Got rocks in your head?' to a troll was suicide. You could commit suicide very easily, if you weren't careful" (Pratchett 1993b, 94).

The crime itself is not actually all that relevant to the subject that is being analysed at this juncture, mainly because it is not a hate crime. Bjorn's death has nothing to do with the fact that he is a dwarf, he just happened to be the most convenient specialist for Edward, and he went to see him regardless of species. One cannot even say that the young Assassin went to the dwarf specialist because he was expendable, because he had absolutely no intention of killing him, going as far as to state that it was the gonne itself that killed Bjorn because it did not want any more of it made. The crime is indeed perceived as having speciesist motives, and that fact will be addressed a little further along in this part of the chapter. What is important to emphasize at this point is that the guards are all extremely motivated to solve the mystery on their hands and they divide themselves to become more efficient. In what can certainly be seen as a more or less innocuous but nevertheless speciesist move, Sergeant Colon pairs up Cuddy and Detritus. He sends out the recruits by themselves mostly because he does not want to deal with them instead of pairing each recruit with a more experienced watchman, but since the experienced watchmen available were him and Corporal Nobbs one could argue the Sergeant ultimately made the right call. The point of this pairing from the literary standpoint, however, is much clearer. On their outing Detritus and Cuddy suffer speciesism at every turn: first, of course, at the hands of each other; then at the hands of

humans, phrases like “you people” being thrown around; and finally, at the hands of their own species for keeping company with each other. The essential growth here lies of course in how the two overcome their differences. Even though their first assignment together produces positive results, the first significant step on the short bur hard road to overcoming their differences comes later. That moment is when Cuddy starts teaching Detritus to count, he is so impressed he even goes as far as to say: “‘You know, (…) you might not be as stupid as you look.” (Pratchett 1993b, 170), that might not seem much, but it is a lot better than “your mother was an ore”. That is their first friendly moment: when they excitedly discuss Detritus’ new very un-trollish ability. Cuddy might be the one to rationally think on the matter and to say: “I just want you to know that I don’t like being teamed up with you any more than you like being teamed up with me. (…) But if we’re going to make the most of it, there’d better be some changes, OK?” (Pratchett 1993, 169). The change on his mind was Detritus’ lack of ability to count and so he proceeds to teach him, there is a thought process there; Detritus on the other hand is not good with thoughts, so his first gesture is not the result of a thought process:

> The distant figure raised what looked like a tick, holding it like a crossbow.
>
> And fired. The first shot zinged off Cuddy’s helmet.
>
> A stony hand clamped on the dwarf’s head and Detritus pushed Cuddy behind him,
>
> (Pratchett 1993b, 182)

Much like the decision-making process behind this action, Detritus simply protected Cuddy. He did not choose to protect him, he did not suddenly realize he should, he just did. That lack of reasoning is what makes this moment so significant, one can call it instinct or muscle memory, but the fact is that something in the troll’s body, probably not his brain, but something, ignored the ancestral animosity that hitherto had been all he had known and put the troll himself in harm’s way to protect a dwarf.

Detritus and Cuddy’s journey, particularly the time they spend trapped in the freezing warehouse where the scene quoted above is set, has more to it, and that setting will be revisited, but it is probably more useful at this point to keep looking at the characters’ evolving partnership. There are still two particularly significant events to mention. The first is Cuddy’s urgency in looking for help to save Detritus from freezing to death is one:

> ‘Where’s the man with the key to this warehouse?’
> ‘If you liked our rat, then why not try our fine selection of–’
> Cuddy’s axe appeared almost magically in his hand.
> ‘I’ll cut your knees off,’ he said.
> ‘GerhardtSockoftheButhers’Guildiswhoyouwant.’ (Pratchett 1993b, 191)

A little context might be required to understand that Dibbler’s answer was far from a provocation, Dibbler being the other party in the conversation. The essential of it is that Dibbler sells street food and, being a thoroughly not speciesist businessman, he has diversified his menu to cater to trolls and dwarfs, because he “liked anyone who had money, regardless of the colour and shape of the hand that was proffering it”. Everyone needs something to overcome prejudice, or a reason not to feel it in the first place, for Carrot it is his kind heart, for Vimes it is pragmatism, for Cuddy and Detritus the opportunity of seeing the lack of sense in the ages-old feud between their species, for Dibbler that reason is greed. The other key information is that rat is actually a delicacy for dwarfs. Since Dibbler did not provoke Cuddy, his emotionally violent reaction is entirely for the purpose of saving Detritus, which he eventually does. Another gesture that is essential to mention is the gift Cuddy fashions for Detritus, one that relates deeply with his time in the freezing warehouse and therefore one that will be explored more fully at a later point.

The event that pertains to Detritus is his reaction to something that does not simply lack the light-hearted nature to which the readers of the Discworld grew accustomed. It is, plainly speaking, tragic, Cuddy’s death:

> ‘That’s Detritus the troll, sir.’
> ‘Why is he sitting like that?’
> ‘He’s thinking, sir.’
> ‘He hasn’t moved for some time.’
> ‘He thinks slow, sir.’
> Detritus stood up. There was something about the way he did it, some hint of a mighty continent beginning a tectonic movement that would end in the fearsome creation of some unscalable mountain range, which made people stop and look. Not one of the watchers was familiar with the experience of watching mountain building, but now they had some vague idea of what it was like: it was like Detritus standing up, with Cuddy’s twisted axe in his hand. (Pratchett 1993b, 346)

Detritus' pain and grief at his friend's death are beyond description, all that can be recounted is once again his actions. This time he did think about what to do and the answer is simple: vengeance. It does not even matter who is at the other end of that vengeance, what does matter is the words Carrot uses to stay his hand:

> 'You listen to me, Acting-Constable Detritus,' said Carrot. 'If there's a heaven for Watchmen, and gods I hope there is, then Acting-Constable Cuddy is there right now, drunk as a bloody monkey, with a rat in one hand and a pint of Bearhugger's in the other, and he's looking (…) at us right now and he's saying: my friend Acting-Constable Detritus won't forget he's a guard. Not Detritus.
>
> There was a long dangerous moment, and then [a] *dink* [caused by Detritus' salute]. (Pratchett 1993b, 364)

Being watchmen brought Cuddy and Detritus together, and it is very possible that, more than the uniform and the obligation, it is that shared bond that stops Detritus.

Inspiring as the change in the two recruits' relationship might be when it comes to the representation of overcoming racial prejudice, what goes on around them is not. The point of certain reactions is probably to provide a stark contrast, but they are still worth a look. One such comment is very illustrative of the common attitude towards trolls: "The old joke went: the trolls live next to the cattleyard? What about the stench? Oh, the cattle don't mind… / Which was daft. Trolls didn't smell, except to other trolls." (Pratchett 1993, 205). Prejudice often defying logic or going against empirical evidence is not exactly an insightful revelation, but that is the point of certain attitudes, to showcase how utterly illogic prejudice is. The character that best represents this unpleasant side of humanity is Captain Quirke. His description will eventually establish his bigotry beyond a shadow of doubt, but arguably his actions speak even louder, as when it was said that he arrested a troll for killing Bjorn on the basis that the victim was a dwarf and the accused a troll (Pratchett 1993, 223). The argument Nobby and Colon claim Quirke defends may seem ridiculous, so much so that the reader might even expect it to be an exaggeration on the part of the borderline incompetent pair, but Quirke's appearance proves that he is as prejudiced as advertised:

> There was, on the whole, no real *racial* prejudice in Ankh-Morpork; when you've got dwarfs and trolls, the mere colour of other humans is not a major item. But Quirke

was the kind of man to whom it comes naturally to pronounce the word negro with two gs. (Pratchett 1993b, 225-226)

Particularly in the first few of the Discworld novels Terry Pratchett used a fair amount of Roundworld imagery in the narration, speaking directly to the reader rather than through the point of view of the characters, but the instance above is not the average example of that sort of crossover, it is not simply a popular reference, it actually connects with the major theme of the novel. Fantasy is indeed useful to hide seriousness under the guise of whimsy, such as the ridiculing of a corrupt and dangerously prejudiced policeman by making him straightforwardly stupid and calling him "Mayonnaise". But sometimes there must be a direct reference to the theme at hand, a reminder that fantasy is not just whimsy for its own sake.

Another important detail to analyse is how the dwarfs and trolls react to seeing Detritus and Cuddy together, which can be summarised in one word: badly. Captain Quirke's arrest caused quite the uproar in both species, with the trolls because they knew the imprisoned troll was innocent and with the dwarfs because they believed, or chose to believe, that the arrest was justified. In any case the two groups were quite willing and ready to wreak some havoc, and the two watchmen are caught between them.

[One troll] said, 'What dis, then?'

'He a man of the Watch, same as me,' said Detritus.

'Him a dwarf.'

'He a Watchman.'

(…)

There were dwarfs coming up the street, with a purposeful and deadly air. The trolls scattered.

Cuddy ran forward.

'What are you lot doing?' he said. 'Are you mad, or something?'

A dwarf pointed a trembling finger at Detritus.

'What's *that*?'

'He's a Watchman.'

'Looks like a troll to me. Get it!' (Pratchett 1993b, 207)

The two Watchman have taken to heart what they have been told regarding the unimportance of species, as can be verified by the actions above and Cuddy's own thoughts: "I'm a guard, thought Cuddy. That's what Sergeant Colon said. Stop being a

dwarf and start being a Watchman. That's what I am. Not a dwarf. A Watchman." (Pratchett 1993b, 206). But perhaps the most interesting thing about this scene whose beginning is quoted above is that the two groups chase the two guards together, forgetting their animosity for one another for a short while due to their common repulsion at finding Cuddy and Detritus defending each other. Repulsion may not be the best common ground, but it does prove effective at least for the duration of that short chase. Of course they soon remember their hatred and start fighting each other, but they did experience a common purpose for an amount of time, even if a very small one.

The last interesting detail about the way Detritus and Cuddy start seeing their own species is that they are both heard saying something along the lines of "you can't trust them". Something Vimes, the quintessential suspicious copper, is heard to say recurrently, not only about his own species but pretty much about every sapient being (Pratchett 1993b, 129; Pratchett 1997, 106-107, to mention a couple of examples).

Aside from prejudice, other adjacent themes still related to the differences between beings arise in the novel, such as biological differences and cultural habits. The main method of illustrating the first pertains to troll intelligence/stupidity, which is explained as follows:

> Trolls evolved in high, rocky and above all in *cold* places. Their silicon brains were used to operating at low temperatures. But down on the muggy plains the heat build-up slowed them down and made them dull. It wasn't that only stupid trolls came down to the city. Trolls who decided to come down to the city were often quite smart – but they *became* stupid. (Pratchett 1993b, 199)

This is very possibly Pratchett's own take on the saying that goes: "you should not judge a fish for its ability to climb trees". Of course if the fish lives in the forest some sort of device to help it climb the tree would sure be appreciated. Once Cuddy figures out that Detritus' cleverness is directly correlated to the cold he decides to construct a helmet to cool his brain:

> 'It this new helmet my mate Cuddy made me, sir. Hah! People can't say, there go stupid troll. They have to say, who that goodlooking military troll there, acting-constable already, great future behind him, he got Destiny written all over him like writing.' (Pratchett 1993b, 329)

A detail about this quote pertains to the fact that trolls believe one goes through life backwards, for them it stands to reason that if one can see the past and not the future one must be facing the past and not the future, so the future lies behind rather than ahead. This novel has a fair portion of it dedicated to providing some insight into both troll and dwarf habits and traditions, helping to establish their cultural identities. It is established, for example, that trollish is a very physical language, a threat being an integral part of an ancient troll oath. And that dwarf women and men looked the same and that their social behaviour was the same and that to dwarfs their work tools are part of them, being almost sacrilegious to use a dead dwarf's tools. But perhaps the most interesting piece of dialogue regarding cultural habits does not pertain to trolls or exclusively to dwarfs, but to clowns:

> 'I showed him a murderer,' said Carrot. '(…) It's like dwarfs and tools. Everyone thinks their own ways. (…) the important thing is that if another clown sees Beano's face go out the door, he's seen the *person* leave. They can't think about someone else wearing that face. It's not how they think. A clown and his make-up are the same thing. Without his make-up a clown doesn't exist. A clown wouldn't wear another clown's face in the same way a dwarf wouldn't use another dwarf's tools.' (Pratchett 1993b, 273-274)

The most important thing to emphasise here is the comparison between a well-established belief of an entire species and that of a rather restricted group of another. Through this comparison culture transcends species. Carrot himself is the perfect vehicle for it because he is a dwarf. By adoption granted, he may be tall and clean-shaven, but culturally and for most dwarfs he is as much of one as those that are short and bearded.

3.1.3. The Commander

Samuel Vimes does not merely represent the Watch officially, in such circumstances as city functions, and answering to Vetinari, he is a sort of literary avatar for the Watch. It can be argued that his initial social advancement was due to the fact that his somewhat unwilling heroism caught the attention of the richest heiress in Ankh-Morpork, Sybil Ramkin, and one of his most important promotions might have been part of an agreement between Carrot and Vetinari. However, as the series progresses his rise will go hand in hand with the evolution of the Watch. Carrot may be more loved, and have more talent to

inspire the troops, but it is Vimes's way of looking at the world that shapes the Watch. The first two novels of the series focus more on Carrot, on his connection with the Ankh-Morpork throne, on his finding his place in the city, but from then on, they start focusing on Vimes. In *Guards! Guards!* Vimes is still rather too fond of the odd alcoholic beverage, a habit that people in the Watch seem to think that he picked up because "the Watch was generally of the opinion that Samuel Vimes was at least two drinks under par, and needed a stiff double even to be sober" (Pratchett 1993b, 215). A moment should be taken here to mention the fact that the Watch books touch on many more social issues that do not pertain to race, such as alcoholism, drugs and vices in general, which should be mentioned even if a close analysis is not within the scope of the theme at hand. In *Men at Arms* Vimes is about to get married, to Lady Sybill Ramkin, and fully intending to retire because of that. That does not stop him from being involved in the investigation of the several deaths, but Vetinari makes the mistake of pushing him too far, and for a good portion of the story Vimes experiments with being a gentleman of leisure and does not actually solve the mystery. This absence, from the point of view of the plot, serves the rather obvious purpose of giving Carrot the opportunity of taking on a leadership role, but it still provides a great deal of information about Vimes that will be relevant for the future. Two pieces of information that are key to point out are: how Vimes fits in the high society of Ankh-Morpork, and the way Vetinari deals with Vimes.

Having been born on a poor but proud part of Ankh-Morpork Vimes is poorly equipped to deal with Lady Sybil's circle of friends, so his initial approach is to mock them by behaving like them, effectively emulating their ignorance, upon which Lady Ramkin does not look kindly:

> 'I was watching you,' [said Lady Ramkin]. 'You were being very rude, Sam.'
>
> 'I was trying not to be.'
>
> 'Lord Eorle is a very old friend.'
>
> 'Is he?'
>
> 'Well, I've known him a long time. I can't stand the man, actually. But you were making him look foolish.'
>
> 'He was making himself look foolish. I was merely helping.'
>
> 'But I've often heard you being… rude about dwarfs and trolls.'
>
> 'That's different. I've got a *right*.' (Pratchett 1993b, 121)

Later on, in the privacy of his own head, Vimes revisits this thinking:

> The point was… well, *he* didn't like dwarfs and trolls. But he didn't like anyone very much. The point was that he moved in their company every day, and he had a right to dislike them. The point was that no fat idiot had the right to say things like that. (Pratchett 1993, 129)

There is hardly a need to transcribe the earlier moments of the scene, where Sybil's guests are being extremely offensive about dwarfs and trolls and Sam Vimes helps them look even more ignorant. This scene is actually fairly important for the study of the theme of this chapter, because these people behave as if the other species were lower life-forms, intruders in their city, a type of behaviour that is not hard to imagine happening in Roundworld with slightly different details.

On the other hand, to understand how Vetinari manipulates Vimes, the best scenes to analyse are their meetings, which change very little in nature throughout the series:

> Lord Vetinari permitted himself a smile, although there was no humour in it
>
> The city *operated.* It was a self-regulating college of Guilds linked by the inexorable laws of mutual self-interest, and it *worked*. On average, By and large. Overall. Normally.
>
> The last thing you needed was some Watchman blundering around upsetting things, like a loose… a loose… a loose siege catapult.
>
> Normally.
>
> Vimes seemed in a suitable emotional state. With any luck, the orders would have the desired effect. (Pratchett 1993b, 93-94)

To better understand the full extent of Vetinari's raising of manipulation to an art-form the scene that ends with the quote above (pages 91-94) should be read in full, but the key phrase to highlight is "the desired effect". Because even while he suffers a fair amount of injuries in his career as Patrician, getting shot in *Man at Arms* and poisoned in *Feet of Clay* for example, Lord Vetinari seems to arrange events so that everything he does does indeed have the desired effect. In this instance that effect includes Vimes finding a loophole in the orders, claiming, when confronted by his wife-to-be, to be investigating the death of a swamp dragon[7] who exploded as part of the plan to steal the gonne. But the dynamic between the two is essential to note, things like Vimes's

[7] Sybil, as a rich aristocrat, has a quirky hobby and passion rather than an actual job: breeding and providing shelter for swamp dragons, small chemically unstable creatures that tend to explode.

impassive face and posture, which he learns to control much better in later novels, his face being usually described as wooden (Pratchett 1999, 25) or something to a similar effect, and his posture as "standing to attention" punctuated with purposefully misplaced salutes (Pratchett 2005, 20-21). Also worth mentioning would be the "sir", which is usually accompanied with reluctant a "yes" or "no" in Vimes's answers, but which often enough is the lone word in them (Pratchett 1993b, 92); and the way Vetinari learns how to make proper use of Vimes's emotional states. But learning is a process, and later in the novel Vetinari does push Vimes too far causing him to not thump the wall (the way Vimes thumps the wall outside the Oblong Office being the way Vetinari measures his emotional state). In that particular meeting however (uncharacteristic because not only does Vimes get flustered when asked to hand in his badge but because Vetinari, possibly for the only time in his life, fails to read a situation properly) Vimes realizes that being a copper is not just his job, it is what he is, even if the direct consequence is that he goes on a drinking binge and goes home after sobering up.

Aside from that essential epiphany it is very important to understand the type of attitude Vimes has towards both the "high class" and government: that the first are mostly foolish and that the latter is to be obeyed but on Vimes's own terms. Both these opinions will be particularly important in the diplomatic facet of Vimes's new and defining job. That job is the position of Commander of the City Watch, which was resurrected specifically for him and last held by his regicidal ancestor. Since it comes with a knighthood, it turns Captain Sam Vimes into Sir Samuel Vimes, Commander of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch.

Outspoken as he is about other people, Vimes is an extremely private person, and the best way to understand his true nature is to look at what he hides and at what people learn from him. He made a terrible first impression on Angua, and it is quite obvious that she is extremely ready to believe the worst of him, as is shown in the episode in which Angua discovers Vimes's notebook which holds the name of a number of females. Angua jumps to the conclusion that Vimes spends his money on "women", the derogative connotation being quite clear, and then discovers that since watchmen do not have a

pension Vimes is actually helping several widows and an orphan (Pratchett 1993b, 212-215.

Vimes is a true leader, not in a way people usually notice, not in a way he notices it himself, he simply instinctively takes care of people. Angua is very possibly the character that will turn out to be most similar to Vimes: she may be a werewolf, female and quite a bit younger, but she sees the world in a similar way. And the fact that when they meet they have such stubborn preconceptions about each other not only shows how similar they actually are but also makes it very difficult for them to find their common ground, which they eventually do. However, they do so organically, no novel actually focuses on how they start getting along, they do not even have many conversations, let alone deep, inspirational ones, they just understand each other on an unspoken level.

Carrot is a different story, as has been mentioned before he is, much more than the Commander, the inspirational motor of the Watch, but he positively drinks in every single word Vimes says. Vimes is the only intellectual authority Carrot needs to inspire others: "But Captain Vimes always told me, sir, that there's big crimes and little crimes. Sometimes the little crimes look big and the big crimes you can hardly see, but the crucial thing is to decide which is which." (Pratchett 1993b, 261). Vimes's wisdom might not be too apparent, be it for most of the Watch or the average reader, but after being sieved through Carrot's singularly honest and uncynical mind, his thoughts and rants become the ideological foundation for the Watch, the multi-cultural beacon that will lead Ankh-Morpork into a more enlightened frame of thought.

3.2. *Feet of Clay, Jingo*

Every Watch novel deals with a social issue, issues of various levels of depth, and the later novels become so intricate that it becomes quite hard to claim a core theme. While it is not possible in a study such as this to emphasise all the themes that arise, a general overview of the plot and key aspects of the novels that cannot be analysed in as much detail as *Men at Arms* must be made.

Feet of Clay, the novel in the series that follows *Men at Arms*, is about slave-labour, but with a twist, the labourers in question are not, nor have ever been, alive. They are golems, beings/devices (opinions vary in that respect) that are made of clay and that have been brought to life/animation by the holy words priests have put in their heads. The ambiguity in the definition of how alive the golems are serves the purpose of shifting the focus of slave-labour from the ethical point of view. Meaning that there are no actual characters that believe that it is right for a creature to have no choice in working, there are just some that consider the golems things rather than beings. The main focus, then, regarding these unseen labourers pertains to that very adjective, to the fact that they are not thought about. It pertains to the fact that if the work appears done people do not question how it appeared done, and if the labourers do not complain then their conditions are not a factor in peoples' minds.

Another issue to point out relates more with the core theme of this chapter, that of understanding and overcoming prejudice: "People always needed someone to feel superior to. The living hated the undead, and the undead loathed (…) the unalive." (Pratchett 1996, 134). Angua's thoughts in this quote are self-explanatory, the character may use the word "people" as a general term for living sapient beings, but since all sapient beings on he Disc represent people in any case, from a literary analysis perspective the word actually means people.

The next novel in the series has been deemed deserving of a closer analysis than most other novels, even if not as detailed as *Men at Arms*. Not because it deals with racism, or speciesism, the proper word within the Discworld, in a more evolved way than the aforementioned novel, as most later novels do. But because it takes a more evolved Ankh-Morpork, prejudice-wise, and puts it in a situation where the city can reveal itself quite as primitive as at the beginning of *Men at Arms*, but for a different reason. Prejudice is still the theme, but in this novel it is not based on the physical appearance or even on cultural habits, at least not enough to be relevant. This time the dislike that borders on hatred is purely based on the other individual's country of origin. Furthermore, the conflict itself is set so that the two sides mirror each other almost perfectly, but for some irrelevant details, this while keeping the narration almost entirely from an Ankh-Morpork

perspective. These two factors of the narration make it obvious to the reader that the patriotic bigotry is a choice, lack of information not being a possible excuse. The plot is set in motion by the emergence of an island precisely in the centre of the Circle Sea, Leshp:

> There was not, on the whole, a lot of geological excitement. (…) the rising of this [continent] caused barely a ripple in the purely physical scheme of things. It more or less sidled back, like a cat who's been away for a few days and knows you've been worrying.
>
> Around the shores of the Circle Sea a large wave, only five or six feet high by the time it reached them, caused some comment. But, in a purely geological sense, nothing very much happened.
>
> In a purely geological sense. (Pratchett 1997, 12-13)

The sudden appearance of land could only have consequences in one other sense: political. And that is one extremely important facet of *Jingo*: international relations. From this one onwards most of the Watch novels will have a strong political component. The ever-increasing size of the Watch means that crime prevention starts to work better giving Vetinari the opportunity to start directing Vimes's talents towards diplomacy. In addition to the blatant xenophobia of the average Klatchian/Morporkian, those first steps Vimes takes as a diplomat will be the other aspect the analysis of the novel will emphasise. The first instance of that mutual xenophobia occurs even before the island rises from the depths, but then it is could be mistaken for not-quite-friendly rivalry between fishermen, Solid Jackson from Ankh-Morpork and Arif from Klatch. A number of insults are exchanged, the word "thief" being key along with several others relating to dishonesty, and the word "foreign" being quite prominent as well (Pratchett 1997, 11). As the island and city rise, however, that rivalry turns to true animosity:

> 'You lunatic!'
>
> 'Foolish man!'
>
> 'Don't touch that building! This country belongs to Ankh-Morpork!'
>
> The two boats spun in a temporary whirlpool.
>
> 'I claim this land in the name of the Seriph of Al-Khali!'
>
> 'We saw it first! Les, you tell him we saw it first!'
>
> 'We saw it first before you saw it first!'
>
> 'Les, you saw him, he tried to hit me with that oar!'
>
> 'But Dad, you're waving that trident–'

'See the untrustworthy way he attacks us, Akhan!'

(…)

'He has set his foot on Klatchian soil! The squid thief!'

'Get those filthy sandals off Ankh-Morporkian territory!'

As the fathers behave like two children who do not want to share a toy, the sons try to draw their attention to the architectural features of the rising buildings. To try and reason with his father and minimize the embarrassment he and the other boy are experiencing, Solid's son mentions that it does not matter who saw the island first because no-one will know, to which his father responds:

> Solid Jackson coughed. 'The lad's right,' he muttered. 'Daft to argue. Just the four of us.'
>
> 'Indeed,' said Arif.
>
> They backed away, each man carefully watching the other. Then, so closely that it was a chorus, they both yelled: 'Grab the boat!'
>
> There was a confused couple of moments and each pair, boat carried over their heads, ran and slithered along the muddy streets.
>
> They had to stop and come back, with mutual cries of 'A kidnapper as *well*, eh?', to get the right sons.
>
> As every student of exploration knows, the prize goes not to the first explorer who first sets foot upon the virgin soil but to the one who gets that foot home first. If it is still attached to his leg, this is a bonus. (Pratchett 1997, 13-15)

Interesting and comical as the role-reversal maturity-wise might be, the main point to take from those comments is that the island has buildings, including at least one weathercock, an immediate clue to the fact that this was not the first time it surfaced. The childish squabbling between the two fishermen, on the other hand, is very important to point out. That will be Vimes's outlook on the situation, that the two nations, with their diplomats, envoys and councils of war, are behaving like petty individuals. The imagery of the commander uses neighbours rather than children, but there is a significant overlap in behaviour:

> Ankh-Morpork had been at peace with Klatch, or at least in a state on non-war, for almost a century. It was, after all, the neighbouring country.
>
> Neighbours… hah! But what did that mean? The Watch could tell you a thing or two about neighbours. So could lawyers, especially the real rich ones to whom 'neighbour' meant a man who'd sue for twenty years over a strip of garden two inches

> wide. People'd live for ages side by side, nodding at one another amicably on their way to work every day, and then some trivial thing would happen and someone would be having a garden fork removed from their ear. And now some damn rock had risen up out of the sea and everyone was acting as if Klatch had let its dog bark all night. (Pratchett 1997, 19-20)

Vimes has been known to boil down complex sociological phenomena to simple and easy-to-understand metaphors. He was the inventor of "Captain Samuel Vimes 'boots' theory of socio-economic unfairness" (Pratchett 1993b, 35), a theory expounded in *Men at Arms* that states that since the rich can buy sturdier, more expensive boots, theirs last almost a lifetime, whereas a poor man's boots while cheap last only a season or two. In the long run, therefore a poor man will spend a lot more money on boots than the rich man. And while to more complex minds this "neighbour" theory might be too simplistic, it is determinant in the way Vimes deals with the situation.

He is quite alone in that simplistic vision, and the meeting the Patrician calls, for the purpose of discussing the political implications of the sudden appearance of an island that is precisely between Ankh-Morpork and Klatch, sheds some light on the general mind-set of the city's leaders, which can be accurately if simplistically surmised in the words: "greed" and "entitlement" (the legal concept that it is claimed should be applied being "*Acquiris Quodcumque Rapis*" which translates as "you get what you grab"). The entire episode (pages 24 to 26) should be considered, but the following are the more important passages:

> 'Why are our people going out there?' said Mr Boggis of the Thieves' Guild.
>
> 'Because they are showing a brisk pioneering spirit and seeking wealth and… additional wealth in a new land,' said Lord Vetinari.
>
> 'What's in it for the Klatchians?' said Lord Downey.
>
> 'Oh, they've gone out there because they are a bunch of unprincipled opportunists always ready to grab something for nothing,' said Lord Vetinari.
>
> 'A masterly summation, if I may say so, my lord, said Mr Burleigh (…).
>
> The Patrician looked down again at his notes. 'Oh, I do beg your pardon,' he said, 'I seem to have read those last two sentences in the wrong order…
>
> (…)

> ‘The history of the ciy of Leshp and its surrounding country is a little obscure. It is known to have been above the sea almost a thousand years ago, however, when records suggest it was considered part of the Ankh-Morpork empire–’
>
> ‘What is the nature of these records and do they tell us who was doing the considering?’ said the Patrician. (…)
>
> ‘The records relating to the lost country date back several hundred years, my lord. And they are of course *our* records.’
>
> ‘Only ours?’
>
> ‘I hardly see how any others could apply,’ said Mr Slant severely.
>
> ‘Klatchian ones, for example?’ said Vimes, from the far end of the table. (Pratchett 1997, 24-26)

The final decision of that meeting consists of the Patrician allowing the aristocrats of Ankh-Morpork to recruit soldiers and form “the regiments”, an inherent right of that class. A right that later he will make a point of reminding Vimes that he, as a knight of the city, can enjoy as well.

Impending war, however dreadful, is not exactly a crime, and for the Watch to get involved there must be a crime, a criminal to chase, which will drive most of the plot, the warring nations being used mostly as a background. It should be mentioned, however, that this novel also has a strong element of critique regarding the recruitment of young, and not-young, men for wars whose reasons they do not understand under the guise of fervent patriotism. The image of Willikins, the Ramkin butler, telling Vimes: “‘Regretfully, I am afraid I must ask leave to give my notice, sir. I wish to join the colours’ (…) The butler’s face showed a patriotic alertness” (Pratchett 1997, 67) represents this best, since he is part of the Ramkin household and as such is the example closest to the main characters.

Before the said crime occurs, however, the novel makes two things abundantly clear: that dislike or even hatred for the Klatchians living, and even born, in Ankh-Morpork is at an all-time high, and that the community of the Disc is paying close attention to the way the two nations resolve the situation.

The first of those things is made clear with a number of actions, namely the throwing of a firebomb into a Klatchian household (Pratchett 1997, 60-61). However, the primitive

thinking behind those actions is perhaps best illustrated by a conversation between Nobby and Fred Colon (which can be found in full in pages 40 to 43):

> 'I hope you ain't being *unpatriotic*,' said Colon severely.
>
> 'No, of course not. I was just asking. I can see where [their priests]'d be a lot worse than ours, being foreign and everything.'
>
> 'And of course they're all mad for fighting,' said Colon. 'Vicious buggers with those curvy swords of theirs.'
>
> 'You mean, like… they viciously attack you while cowardly running away after tasting cold steel?' said Nobby, who sometimes had a treacherously good memory for detail.
>
> 'You can't trust 'em, like I said.' (Pratchett 1997, 42-43)

This conversation goes on and on, but the gist is in the words above. The xenophobia itself needs no pointing out, blatant as it is, but the scene quoted above does go to great lengths to forge a connection between the Discworld Klatchian culture and the Roundworld Arabic culture. Given the political situation in the world at the time the novel was published, and for that matter the years before and after, it is highly unlikely that that connection is a mere coincidence.

The diplomatic side of the issue is best illustrated by the scene in which the Commander of the Watch meets the envoy from Klatch, who will shortly after be the victim of the aforementioned plot-driving crime:

> Quite a few of the ambassadors were there, too. (…)
>
> *The world is watching*, Vimes thought. If something went wrong and this stupid Leshp business started a war, it's men like these who'd be working out exactly how to deal with the winner, whoever it was. (…) They represented what people called the 'international community'.
>
> 'Ah, Sir Samuel!' said a booming voice behind him, I don't think you've met Prince Khufurah yet, have you?'
>
> (…)
>
> 'Commander Vimes *always* gets his man,' said the Prince.
>
> 'Well, I wouldn't say I–'
>
> 'Vetinari's terrier, I've heard them call you,' the Prince went on. 'Always hot on the chase, they say, and he won't let go.' (…) 'In fact it is fortuitous I have met you, commander.'
>
> 'It is?'

'I was just wondering about the meaning of the word shouted at me as we were on our way down here. Would you be so kind?'

'Er… if I…'

'I believe it was *towelhead*.'

The Prince stayed locked on Vimes' face.

Vimes was conscious of his own thoughts moving very fast, and they seemed to reach their own decision. We'll explain later, they said. You're too tired for explanations. Right now, with this man, it's oh so much better to be honest…

'It… refers to your headdress,' he said.

'Oh. Is it some kind of obscure joke?'

Of *course* he knows, thought Vimes. And he knows I know…

'No. It's an insult,' (Pratchett 1997, 75)

This scene is not actually particularly important for the plot of *Jingo*. There is an attempt on the life of the Klatchian ambassador, and Vimes does not rest until he finds and arrests the culprit, and their meeting is useful, but the significance of this exchange pertains mostly to the fact that it represents Vimes's first foray into diplomacy. Seizing the other person, understanding them, being as honest as needed, Vimes may think to himself that that is not his world, but he is already quite good. And this mindset will be seen in his method for solving the crime, so as to, unlike his previous methods, not upset further the delicate political situation in which the city is. His thoughts on the mystery itself are revealed in due time, but before that he tasks the two men under his command more in tune with the mindset of the average citizen, Sergeant Colon and Corporal Nobbs, to discover who tried to kill Prince Khufurah. Vimes's suspicions on what conclusions those two will draw appease the city leaders, while not actually convincing the Patrician, who nevertheless is quite happy with the Commander's diplomatic initiative. In private, Vimes tries to make proper sense of the attempted murder, which was made in fact by a different man than the one Nobby and Fred had concluded to be guilty, something both Vimes and Vetinari were aware of in their meeting:

'So what the hell does that all add up to?' he said. 'The man we know *didn't* get the Prince is dead. The man who probably *did*… is dead. Someone tried very hard to make it look as if Ossie was paid by the Klatchians. (…) They get Snowy to do the real business, and he helps poor dumb Ossie who's there to take the fall, and then the Watch *proves* that Ossie was in the pay of the Klatchians and that's *another* reason for fighting.

> And Snowy just slopes off. Only someone cured his dandruff for him.' (Pratchett 1997, 153)

This is Vimes's true crime solving process, retelling what does not make sense in the mystery. And it is important to point out because it shows that he is indeed "Vetinari's terrier", he does not give up or content himself with the obvious solution. The quote above explains well enough the nature of the crime, and its complexity, but there is one other thought that arrives in Vimes's head in the following pages that when added to the quote practically solve the mystery: "Vimes told himself that there was no reason at all why a Klatchian couldn't be a pompous little trouble-maker." (Pratchett 1997, 158). The thought in question did not refer to the true culprit, but it was a step in the right direction, because for most of the novel Vimes is hindered by another thought: "Sands in their sandals… The *nerve* of it! Did they think he was stupid? (…) Someone wanted Vimes to chase Klatchians." (Pratchett 1997, 159). The dynamics at play here are quite convoluted. Vimes is offended by the fact that someone would think him unintelligent enough to blame a certain body of people on easily planted and rather obvious evidence, thus throwing him off the path to find the criminals who were in fact part of that body of people. The fact that he realises that Klatchians are quite as capable of devising a plan as devious as he would is what makes it possible for him to solve the crime. The culprit, it should be stated, is the Seriph of Al-Khali himself, Prince Cadram, who tried to have his own brother killed and start a war that would give the warring countries of Klatch a common enemy to fight.

The plot of this novel is fairly complicated, filled with high-speed ship chases, not particularly helpless damsels in distress, spies, even submarines (or the Discworld equivalent), a particularly interesting crime that results in the arrest of both the Ankh-Morpork and Klatchian armies and a particularly clever solution for the problem. That solution is a prime example of how fantasy can within its own logic provide answers to problems ispired by the real world, but which in turn are not even remotely possible to use as an inspiration for their solution. Vetinari's solution to end the conflict is to remove the cause by sinking Leshp. Which leads to the conclusion that this novel was not an exercise in finding a solution to the type of problem it is about, but rather to shine a light on the kind of thinking that causes it.

As regards the overall arch of the series, it is extremely important to inform that due to his actions Vimes is promoted yet again. Not within the Watch, within the political landscape of the city. It is not stated that Vimes's successful treading of diplomatic waters was behind Vetinari's decision, but given the theme of the following novel, *The Fifth Elephant*, that is a possibility to take into consideration. Commander Sir Samuel Vimes becomes His Grace, Sir Samuel Vimes, Commander of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch, Duke of Ankh.

One of the last episodes of the book (Pratchett 1997, 407-408) can be used to conclude the argument here, just to show that in the Discworld, as in Roundworld, people do not necessarily learn the proper lessons even after going through rather monumental events: two stranded men and their sons (who, if they are not Solid and Arif and their children, bear remarkable similarities to them in behaviour) squabble and reluctantly cooperate to survive only, to try and head to opposite ends of the Circle Sea.

While diplomacy was failing on the shores of the Circle Sea, at its centre on the island of Leshp its new inhabitants, while having started their relationship with conflict, soon discovered that the hardships of living in a new land would be all the harder if they did not learn to share the different resources the island provided to each community. The episode just mentioned combines both the latent animosity between the two groups, the sheer stubbornness of claiming ownership, and the tentative peace based on mutual gain, representing uncannily the relationship between the two countries.

3.3. *The Fifth Elephant, Night Watch, Thud!, Snuff*

The Fifth Elephant sees Vimes's first official mission as an ambassador to Ankh-Morpork, which as a Duke he is automatically qualified to be. Regarding the overall analysis of the series, that is the main point to emphasise, at least when it comes to the main theme this chapter is concerned with. The more fully analysed novels have dealt closely with interpersonal prejudices, not exclusively, obviously, but still the main aspects were social rather than political. From *The Fifth Elephant* onwards, the focus will start to lean more heavily towards the political. This novel concerns the election of the Low King

of the Dwarfs, whose throne is in Schmaltzberg. That underground city, in turn, is beneath Bonk, pronounced Beyonk, a capital of sorts to the ever-feuding feudalistic land of Uberwald, a land of storms, vampires, werewolves and Igors. The plot itself focuses strongly on the character of Wolfgang Von Uberwald, Angua's brother, a werewolf who is determined to rule Uberwald with the help of a racially-pure army of werewolves. The racial extremism is undoubtedly a major aspect of the novel that would integrate neatly in the overall theme of this chapter. Aside from that, what is relevant to mention is the election and coronation of Rhys Rhysson, an extremely forward-thinking Low King that will play a major part in later novels. As a side note, it should also be mentioned that Sam Vimes discovers at the end of the novel that soon he will become a father, which happens in the following novel, the discovery being the first step in the Commander's foray into parenthood. Vimes's parenting duties from here on will provide a different facet of his identity, which none of his new titles and job-related duties did. Now he is not just a copper, he is a father as well.

Night Watch deals with police corruption. Vimes is forced to go back in time to help his younger self. This mechanism is of course an excuse to show a Watch that Vimes and Carrot have changed drastically. A major sign of The Watch's importance for the good functioning of the city is that Vimes has been taken off the Assassins' Guild register. Being an expensive contract means one is hard to kill, being a ludicrously expensive contract means one is almost literally impossible to kill, but being taken off means that one has become absolutely essential in the political landscape of the city. Only Vetinari was rumoured to have had that benefit, until Vimes too was deemed worth not being killed for an immense amount of money. The novel does touch on the subject of racial prejudice as well, Reg Shoe (a zombie) not being welcome in a cemetery being one such instance (Pratchett 2002, 33-34), but the main thing to highlight is the respect that multi-species body commands at this point, as illustrated by the lack of price on Vimes's head.

Thud! is the novel where all the racial tension between dwarfs and trolls explodes, and Ankh-Morpork is at the centre of the conflict, having become the most complete cultural melting-pot on the Disc. The plot itself is much more demanding and evolved than *Men at Arms*, particularly when it comes to the plotline concerning the police's war

on drugs. But the general theme is very similar to the one dealt with in the second Watch novel, albeit in a considerably more sophisticated fashion. Furthermore, Vimes once again must make use of his diplomatic talents, but this time not as an envoy to a distant land, but as the Commander of the City Watch. The weighing of Vimes's duties as the Commander of a peacekeeping corps and his duties as the father to an infant son should also be mentioned as a major part of the novel. The crime that drives the plot is the murder of a dwarf, and this time the dwarfs themselves frame a troll. But that mystery is a very small part of a conflict that is on the verge of driving the city into chaos and the best phrase that describes it is "Koom Valley":

> Koom Valley wasn't really a place now, not any more. It was a state of mind.
>
> If you wanted the bare facts, it was where the dwarfs had ambushed the trolls and/or the trolls had ambushed the dwarfs (…). Oh, they'd fought one another since Creation, as far as Vimes understood it, but at the Battle of Koom Valley that mutual hatred became (…) Official, and (…) had developed a kind of mobile geography. Where any dwarf fought any troll, there was Koom Valley. (Pratchett 2005, 35-36)

This attitude shows the essential dynamic between the two species, which more than the way the plot develops, is the key aspect of *Thud!* to mention. The resolution of the plot sees the two species overcoming this state of mind that is Koom Valley, seeing the frame of mind that makes the Watch so important (a frame of mind that admittedly wavers during this novel due to social tension) extend beyond Pseudopolis Yard, the Headquarters of the Watch.

The last of the Watch novels, *Snuff*, which is not to say the last appearance of the characters starring in the Watch novels, sees a return of a more social outlook, deeply connected to racial issues, the darkest possible take on racial issues. First of all, to symbolise the completion of the City Watch and how fat Ankh-Morpork itself has come, *Snuff* sees Vimes leaving the city by choice (his wife's choice, truthfully, but not the city's) rather than on duty, only to find that anywhere there is oppression that needs rectifying. To return the focus of the series to its original interpersonal concerns, *Snuff* introduces a species that even if it was not exactly new to the Disc had certainly not been prominent in the Discworld novels: the goblins. The novel sees the goblins being treated as animals, not merely second-class citizens or ostracized beings. It presents the species

as being pitifully downtrodden. Dwarfs and trolls suffered prejudice, but they were strong species, capable of being speciesist right back, but the goblins are not. This novel on a cursory analysis will seem repetitive, because it is about the social dominance of one species over another. But this new species suffering at the hands of the dominant one serves a much deeper purpose than the ones that were used before, because they need to be defended, because they are complacent, because they believe they are weak. And it is with the overcoming of that perception of weakness on the part of representatives of both the dominating and the dominated that the Watch series closes.

As has been made clear, the Watch itself, after it becomes a multi-species police-corps, provides the perfect object to be the protagonist of novels focusing on social issues, particularly those relating to prejudice. But it is also important to note its organic growth. The reason it became such an important body within the city is that it fully represented its cultural landscape, providing at least one individual virtually every citizen will be inclined to trust. Watchmen are watchmen first and human, troll, dwarf, zombie, werewolf, gnome, Igor, vampire, male and female second, but they are both still. That philosophy is what causes Ankh-Morpork itself to become more open-minded, and to lead the world in that frame of thought. All it took for all that to happen was for one man, Samuel Vimes, to see the practical use in overcoming prejudice. Of course, another man gave him power to expand that view (Vetinari) and yet another to turn that pragmatic point of view into an ideology (Carrot), but ultimately it was not ethics or politics that convinced the Discworld to put aside its differences, it was the tenacious single-mindedness of someone who saw that prejudice was quite plainly a waste of energy.

Figure 3. The Ankh-Morpork City Watch (Paul Kidby, in Pratchett and Kidby 2004)

Conclusion

The proposed objective for this essay was to show how fantasy can mirror, while distorting, humanity.

As was demonstrated in the first part of the first chapter, there are a number of aspects that connect these carnivalesque mirrors that are fantasy stories, even if those aspects are not particularly easy to define. Roughly from that general template, Pratchett built a particularly wide mirror: a flat one that is adorned by four elephants, a cosmic turtle and orbiting sun and moon.

The problem with distortion is that if the new image is not presented with the original one it is not always easy to figure out what the latter is.

After reading this study perhaps it is not too hard to imagine that what in the mirror is an impressive black-clad, scythe-carrying, pale-horse-riding skeleton, was in fact just a regular person that does not, but wishes to, understand what it means to be human, to be a self, to feel.

Or that what in the mirror is a group of mismatched creatures all wearing uniforms vaguely reminiscent of one another, was originally a bigoted society that should learn to put aside its differences and that certainly has that ability.

One key conclusion that was reached when analysing Death's journey of self-discovery was that very likely the first human impulse Death felt was curiosity. And due to that curiosity, he grew close to humans as a whole, and then to one individual, his servant Albert. After forging a hierarchically distant connection with a human what Death did next was adopt a daughter. More than a desire for a family, pity and kindness were the most likely reasons for this particular decision. Nevertheless, a family was what Ysabell became. After years of something very similar to imprisonment, Death's daughter started to feel sad, something Death thought should be fixed, which is the starting point of the first novel that centres on Death. In that novel it becomes apparent that Death's caring for his daughter is one important, and perhaps main, reasons for his actions, a major, if not the most important step in his journey into discovering what it might mean to be human. Afterwards Death experiences mortality, which is also an important step in

his journey. The novels centred around his characters also explore the theme further by making the Auditors, “beings” that hate Death for his humanness, become humans as well, their initial impulse to do so being based on aggression rather than kindness or curiosity. But pertaining to Death himself, the most important human trait he developed was the ability to care for a daughter (it is immaterial if that caring was thought or felt, because since glands play such an important part in feeling, a skeleton is right away at a disadvantage there).

A corps made of individuals from dozens of different cultures is the perfect case study to understand how cultures clash because the individuals are both united by their common duty and divided by varying ideologies. The Ankh-Morpork City Watch becomes such a corps, and the differences among the varying ideologies are made all the sharper by making the different cultures in question be associated, for the most part, not with different races or ethnicities but with different species. Several different issues arise, the most ubiquitous pertaining to prejudice. But perhaps the key aspect to take from the analysis of the Watch books made here is that, very possibly, the most efficiently lasting way to overcome prejudice is not to attempt to make people understand that prejudice is wrong, as the deeply moral Captain Carrot would do, but that is just plain useless, as would the pragmatic Commander Vimes.

Terry Pratchett is all but conventional, but his works do not as a rule use fantasy for its own sake. The Discworld is a world, and one that shows not only what is fantastic in the human imagination, but what is human in the fantastic.

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Annexes

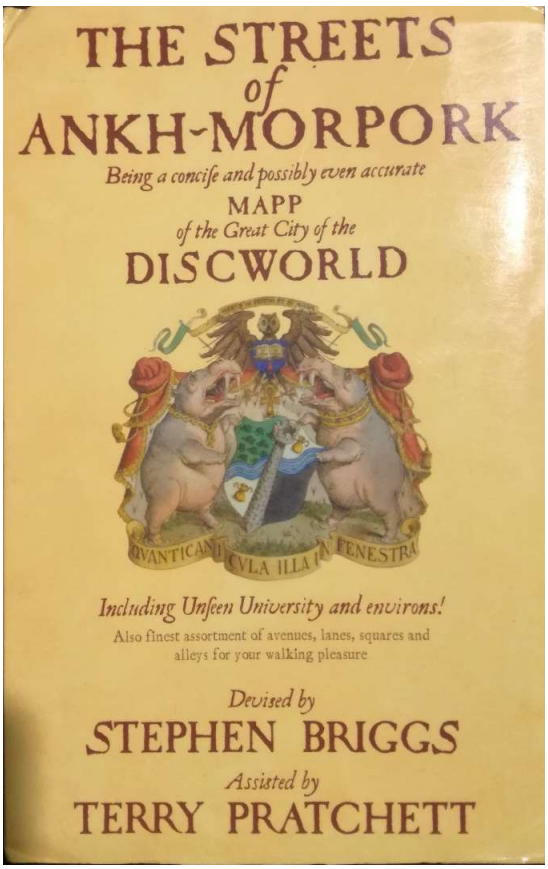

Figure 4. The Streets of Ankh-Morpork (cover) (Briggs and Pratchett 1993)

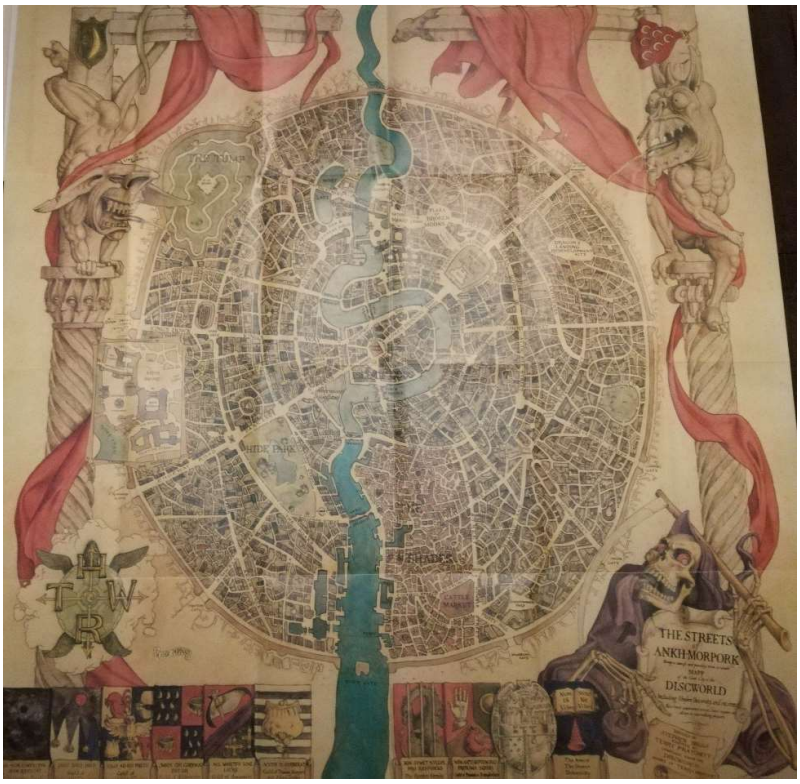

Figure 5. The Streets of Ankh-Morpork (map) (Stephen Player, in Briggs Pratchett and 1993)

Figure 6. The Discworld Mapp (map) (Stephen Player, in Pratchett and Briggs 1995)

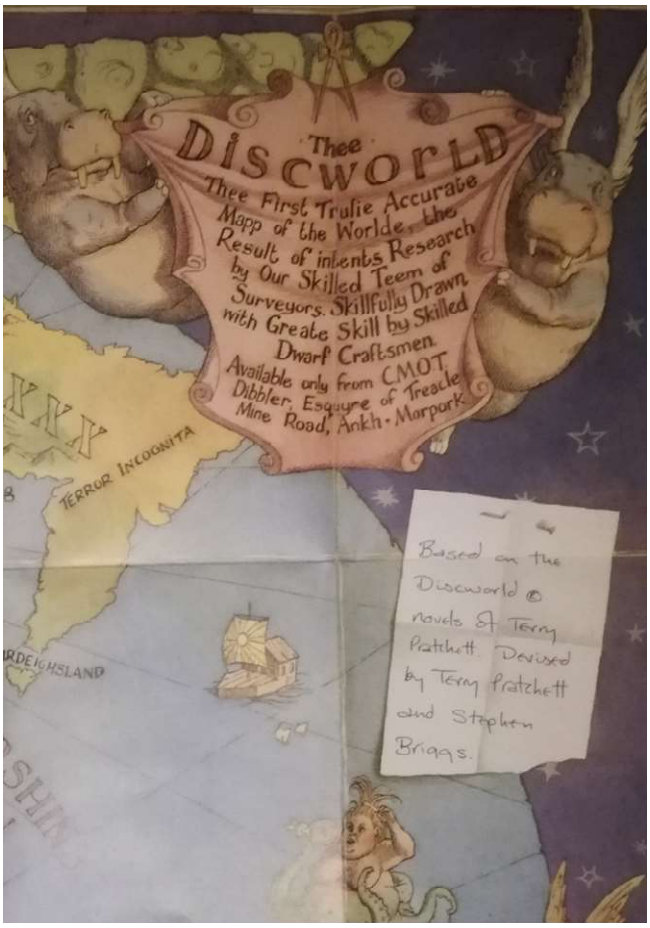

Figure 7. The Discworld Mapp (heading and note) (Stephen Player, in Pratchett and Briggs 1995)

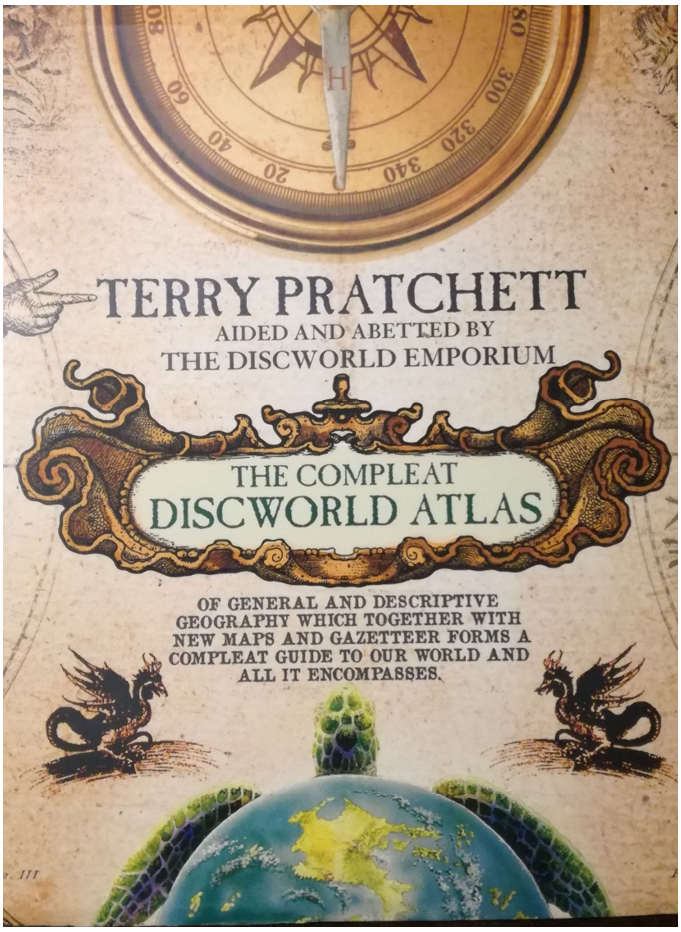

Figure 8. The Discworld Atlas (cover) (Pratchett 2015)

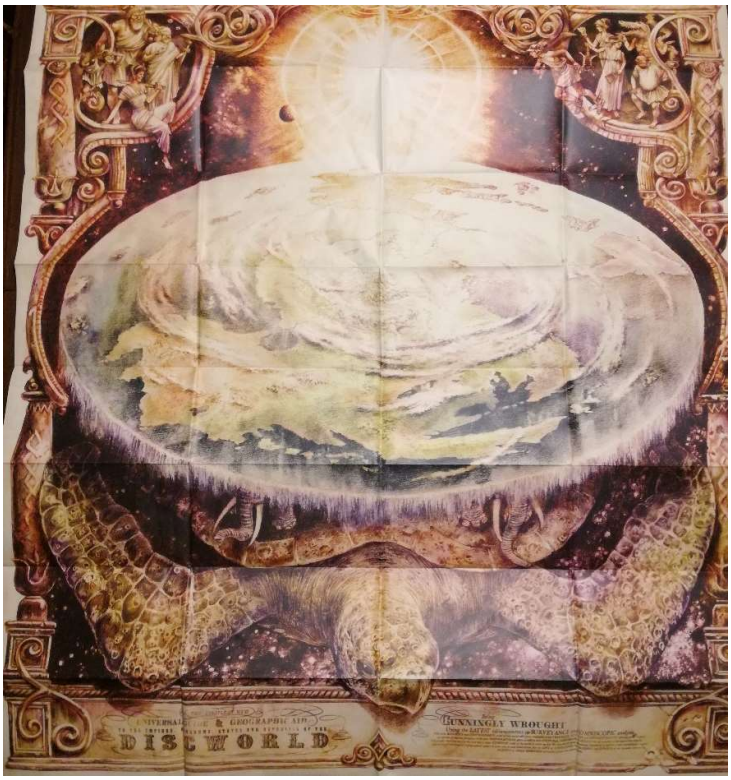

Figure 9. The Discworld Atlas (world-view) (Peter Dennis, in Pratchett 2015)

Figure 10. The Discworld Atlas (map) (Peter Dennis, in Pratchett 2015)